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specimens of  
**The Early  
English Poets**

BY GEORGE ELLIS

VOL. I.

London.

HENRY WASHBOVRNE

18, NEW BRIDGE STREET

BLACKFRIARS.







**SPECIMENS .**  
**OF THE**  
**EARLY ENGLISH POETS; .**

**TO WHICH IS PREFIXED,**  
**AN HISTORICAL SKETCH OF THE**  
**RISE AND PROGRESS OF THE ENGLISH POETRY**  
**AND LANGUAGE,**

**WITH A**  
**Biography of each Poet,**  
**&c.**

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**BY**  
**GEORGE ELLIS, Esq.**

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**THE FIFTH EDITION, CORRECTED.**  
**IN THREE VOLUMES.**

**VOL. I.**

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**LONDON:**  
**HENRY WASHBOURNE, NEW BRIDGE STREET,**  
**BLACKFRIARS.**  
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# PREFACE

TO THE

## SECOND EDITION.

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THE first edition of this Miscellany, which appeared in 1790, was intended as an attempt "to comprise, within the compass of one volume, all the most beautiful small poems that had been published in this country during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries;" but it was, at the same time, admitted, that "the completion of the publisher's plan had been prevented by the difficulty of procuring a sufficient stock of materials."

This difficulty has been since removed by the kind assistance of my friends; and the work, in its present state, contains a selection, made with some care and attention, from a considerable number of the best poetical libraries in this country. That it is still deficient, and that by greater industry it might have been improved, is very certain<sup>1</sup>: but

<sup>1</sup> To what degree it is defective, the reader will be better able to judge, when Mr. Ritson shall have printed his "Bibliographia

the reader, who shall fairly examine the stock of materials here collected, will not be much surprised if the curiosity of the compiler was at length satiated, and if the labour of transcription became too irksome to be farther continued.

It has been objected to the former collection that it consisted, almost exclusively, of love-songs and sonnets. The objection was certainly just, but the blame cannot fairly be imputed to an editor, who must be satisfied to take such instances of literary excellence as he can find; and who, though he may lament, with his readers, that beautiful poetry is more frequently calculated to inflame the imagination than to chasten the morals, can only lament, without being able to remedy, such a perversion of talent.

The collection, in its present state, will be found to contain much more variety. The two parts into which it is divided are, indeed, directed to one principal object; which is, to exhibit, by means of a regular series of Specimens, the rise and progress of our language, from the tenth to the latter end of the seventeenth century. In the former part, which terminates with the reign of Henry VIII., the extracts

Poetica, a Catalogue of English Poets of the twelfth, thirteenth, fourteenth, fifteenth, and sixteenth centuries, with a short account of their works." It is said to be completed, and intended for immediate publication. [This accurate repertory has since appeared in one volume 8vo, 1802. Nicol.]

are generally chosen with a view to picturesque description, or to the delineation of national manners; whereas the second division of the work is meant to exhibit the best models that could be found, in each reign, of regular and finished composition. In the former, which consists of very early fragments, it was thought that a few critical remarks, as well as biographical anecdotes, were absolutely necessary; and that these could not be given more concisely than in the form of an historical sketch: but in the latter, a short outline of the literary character of each reign, and a few notices respecting the several writers, appeared to be sufficient. To the whole is added a sort of Essay on the formation and early gradations of our language, which, being little more than a repetition of some observations contained in the first volume, is perhaps superfluous; but may be convenient for the purpose of reference.

The title of these volumes will show, that they are by no means intended to supersede Mr. Warton's very learned and entertaining, though desultory work, from which they are, in part, abridged; but rather to serve as an useful index to his History. Neither do they interfere with the valuable modern Miscellanies of Bishop Percy, Mr. Pinkerton, Mr. Ritson, the late Mr. Headley, and Mrs. Cooper; from all of which they differ materially, except in the general purpose of selecting what is most valuable from the scarcest and least accessible compositions of our early literature.

It is only necessary to add, that the Saxon Ode, which in this work will be found to differ materially from the text of Dr. Hickes, and of Gibson's Saxon Chronicle, was kindly furnished by the Rev. Mr. Henshall, who collated the printed copies with two excellent MSS. in the Cotton Library; and who had the farther complaisance to supply the literal English version, as well as the learned notes with which it is accompanied.

# ADVERTISEMENT

TO THE

THIRD EDITION.

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NOTWITHSTANDING the care with which the former edition of this work was revised during its progress through the press, it was found to contain very numerous, though not very important typographical errors. For the detection and removal of these ; for the collation of nearly all the extracts contained in the work with the earliest and best copies of the originals, whether printed or manuscript ; for the insertion of some new Specimens ; and for much additional information in the notices prefixed to the several authors ; the editor is indebted to the kindness of his friend Mr. Heber, and to the frequent assistance of Mr. Park.

The defects which still remain are solely chargeable to the editor. Many of these, however, will, it is hoped, be removed by the publication of a second



series of Specimens, selected from our *Early Metrical Romances*, which will complete the sketch of our poetical antiquities, and is now nearly ready for the press.

## CHRONOLOGICAL LIST OF POETS,

FROM WHOSE WORKS EXTRACTS HAVE BEEN GIVEN IN  
THESE VOLUMES.

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As in many instances it has not been possible to ascertain the precise year of an author's birth or death, the reader is requested to observe, that when the word *about* precedes the date, it must be understood to be correct within two or three years; where a mark of interrogation is annexed, the date is only offered as an approximation deduced from the author's earliest compositions.

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### HISTORICAL SKETCH.

	BORN.	DIED.
1 Robert of Gloucester . . . . .	1290 ?	—
2 Robert Mannyng . . . . .	about 1270	—
3 Adam Davie . . . . .	1280 ?	—
4 <i>Robert Langland</i> ? . . . . .	1300 ?	—
5 John Gower . . . . .	1326 ?	1402
6 John Barbour . . . . .	about 1326	1396
7 Geoffrey Chaucer . . . . .	1328	1400
8 Andrew of Wyntown . . . . .	1352 ?	—
9 John Lydgate . . . . .	1375 ? abt.	1462
10 James I. (of Scotland) . . . . .	1395	1437
11 Henry VI. . . . .	1421	1471
12 Robert Henrysoun . . . . .	1425 ?	1495 ?

	BORN.	DIED.
13 Juliana Berners . . . . .	1440 ?	—
14 Henry the Minstrel . . . . .	about 1446	—
15 Patrick Johnstoun . . . . .	—	—
16 — Mersar . . . . .	—	1520
17 William Dunbar . . . . .	1455 ?	1520
18 John Skelton . . . . .	about 1463	1529
19 Gawin Douglas . . . . .	1475	1522
20 Stephen Hawes . . . . .	1480 ?	15—
21 Walter Kennedy . . . . .	—	—
22 Quintyn Schaw . . . . .	14— abt.	1520
23 William Roy . . . . .	1490 ?	15—
24 Sir David Lindsay . . . . .	about 1490	1553
25 Henry VIII. . . . .	1493	1547
26 John Heywood . . . . .	1500 ? abt.	1565

## SPECIMENS.

27 George Boleyn, Visc. Rochford . .	1500 ?	1536
28 Sir Thomas Wyatt . . . . .	1503	1541
29 Thomas Vaux, Lord Vaux . . .	1507 ? abt.	1557
30 Henry Howard, Earl of Surrey . .	1520 ?	1546-7
31 John Hall . . . . .	1520 ?	—
32 Nicholas Grimoald . . . . .	1520 abt.	1563
33 Richard Edwards . . . . .	about 1523	1566
34 Thomas Tusser . . . . .	about 1523	1580
35 Thomas Norton . . . . .	1524 ?	—
36 Alexander Scot . . . . .	1525 ?	—
37 — Clapperton . . . . .	1525 ?	—
38 Elizabeth . . . . .	1533	1603
39 Webster (George ?) Puttenham, abt.	1534	—
40 John Harington . . . . .	1534 ?	1582
41 Edward Vere, Earl of Oxford . .	1534 ?	1604
42 Barnaby Googe . . . . .	1535 ?	—
43 George Gascoigne . . . . .	1540 ?	1578 ?
44 George Turberville . . . . .	1540 ?	—

	BORN.	DIED.
45 Sir Edward Dyer . . . . .	1540 ?	161-
46 Henry Willoby . . . . .	1540 ? abt.	1595
47 Dr. John Still . . . . .	about 1542	1607
48 Robert Green . . . . .	1550 ?	1592
49 Humfrey Gifford . . . . .	1550 ?	—
50 Sir Walter Raleigh . . . . .	1552	1618
51 Timothy Kendall . . . . .	1552 ?	—
52 Edmund Spenser . . . . .	about 1553	1598-9
53 John Lylie . . . . .	about 1553 abt.	1600
54 Sir Philip Sidney . . . . .	1554	1586
55 Fulke Greville, Lord Brook . . . .	1554	1628
56 Nicholas Breton . . . . .	1555 ?	1624 ?
57 George Chapman . . . . .	1557	1634
58 William Warner . . . . .	1558 ?	1608-9
59 Robert Southwell . . . . .	1560	1595
60 Thomas Watson . . . . .	1560 abt.	1591
61 Thomas Lodge . . . . .	about 1560	1625
62 Sir John Harington . . . . .	1561	1612
63 Samuel Daniel . . . . .	1562	1619
64 Christopher Marlowe . . . . .	1562 ?	1592
65 Joshua Sylvester . . . . .	1563	1618
66 Michael Drayton . . . . .	1563	1631
67 William Shakspeare . . . . .	1564	1616
68 Simon Wastel . . . . .	about 1566	—
69 Henry Constable . . . . .	about 1566	—
70 Robert Devereux, Earl of Essex . .	1567	1601
71 James I. . . . .	1567	1625
72 Sir Henry Wotton . . . . .	1568	1639
73 Barnaby Barnes . . . . .	1569	16—
74 William Fowler . . . . .	1569 ?	—
75 Sir John Davis . . . . .	about 1570	1626
76 William Smith . . . . .	1571 ?	—
77 Dr. John Donne . . . . .	1573	1631
78 Dr. Joseph Hall . . . . .	1574	1656
79 Ben Jonson . . . . .	1574	1637
80 Richard Barnfield . . . . .	about 1574	—

	BORN.	DIED.
81 Henry Peacham . . . . .	15—	16—
82 Thomas Campion . . . . .	1575 ?	—
83 John Fletcher . . . . .	1576	1625
84 Robert Burton . . . . .	1576	1639
85 George Sandys . . . . .	1577	1643
86 Thomas Carew <sup>1</sup> . . . . .	1577 ?	1634
87 Thomas Heywood . . . . .	1580 ?	16—
88 Wm. Alexander, Earl of Sterline .	1580	1640
89 Wm. Herbert, Earl of Pembroke .	1580 ?	1630
90 Dabridgcourt Belchier . . about	1581	1621
91 Lord Herbert of Cherbury . . .	1582	1648
92 Francis Davison . . . . .	1582 ?	16—
93 Sir John Beaumont . . . . .	1582	1628
94 Phineas Fletcher . . . . about	1584	abt. 1650
95 Francis Beaumont . . . . .	1585	1615
96 William Drummond . . . . .	1585	1649
97 Sir Francis Kinaston . . . about	1585	abt. 1642
98 David Murray . . . . .	1586 ?	16—
99 Giles Fletcher . . . . .	1588 ?	1623
100 George Wither . . . . .	1588	1667
101 Richard Brathwait . . . . .	1588	1673
102 William Browne . . . . about	1590	abt. 1645
103 Thomas Freeman . . . . about	1591	16—
104 Dr. Henry King . . . . .	1591	1669
105 Robert Herrick . . . . .	1591	16—
106 Francis Quarles . . . . .	1592	1644
107 George Herbert . . . . .	1593	1632-3
108 Izaak Walton . . . . .	1593	1683
109 James Shirley . . . . about	1594	1666
110 Patrick Hannay . . . . .	1594 ?	16—
111 Thomas May . . . . .	1595	1650
112 John Hagthorpe . . . . .	1597 ?	16—

<sup>1</sup> Notwithstanding what is said in iii. 140, it has been thought best, on deliberate consideration, to place Carew's birth as above. His death certainly happened in 1634.

	BORN.	DIED.
113 Sir John Mennis . . . . .	1598	1670
114 Robert Gomersall . . . . .	1600	—
115 Dr. William Strode . . . about	1601	1644
116 Sir Kenelm Digby . . . . .	1603	1665
117 Dr. Jasper Mayne . . . . .	1604	1672
118 Dr. James Smith . . . . .	1604	1667
119 Sir William D'Avenant . . . .	1605	1668
120 Edmond Waller . . . . .	1605	1687
121 William Habington . . . . .	1605	1654
122 Thomas Randolph . . . . .	1605	1634
123 Sir Richard Fanshaw . . . . .	1607	1666
124 Sir Aston Cokain . . . . .	1608	1683
125 John Milton . . . . .	1608	1674
126 Sir John Suckling . . . . .	1608-9	1641
127 Sidney Godolphin . . . . .	1610	1642-3
128 William Cartwright . . . . .	1611	1643
129 Henry Delaune . . . . .	1611 ?	—
130 Thomas Nabbes . . . . .	1612 ?	—
131 George Digby, Earl of Bristol . .	1612	1676
132 Henry Glapthorne . . . . .	1614 ?	—
133 Richard Crashaw . . . . about	1615	abt. 1650
134 Sir John Denham <sup>2</sup> . . . . .	1615	1668
135 John Tatham . . . . .	1615 ?	—
136 Thomas Beedome . . . . .	1616 ?	—
137 Sir Edward Sherburne . . . . .	1618	17—
138 Richard Lovelace . . . . .	1618	1658
139 Abraham Cowley . . . . .	1618	1667
140 Andrew Marvell . . . . .	1620	1678
141 Alexander Brome . . . . .	1620	1666
142 Thomas Stanley . . . . about	1620	1678
143 Henry Vaughan . . . . .	1621	1695
144 Sir Robert Howard . . . about	1622	1698

<sup>2</sup> In both editions of the *Biographia Britannica*, Cibber's *Lives of the Poets*, and Mr. Ritson's *Anthology*, Sir John Denham's death is erroneously placed twenty years later.

	BORN.	DIED.
145 Samuel Sheppard . . . . .	1622 ?	—
146 Dr. Martin Lluellyn . . . . .	1623 ?	—
147 Dr. John Collop . . . . .	1623 ?	—
148 Robert Heath . . . . .	1625 ?	—
149 Edmund Prestwick . . . . .	1626 ?	—
150 John Hall . . . . .	1627	1656
151 Richard Fleckno . . . . .	1628 ?	1678
152 Matthew Stevenson . . . . .	1629 ?	—
153 Robert Baron . . . . .	1630	—
154 Charles Cotton . . . . .	1630	1687
155 John Dryden . . . . .	1631	1701
156 Thomas Flatman . . . . .	about 1635	1688
157 Sir Charles Sedley . . . . .	about 1639	1701
158 Aphra Behn . . . . .	about 1644	1689
159 Robert Veel . . . . .	1648	—
160 John Wilmot, Earl of Rochester .	1648	1680
161 Sir Francis Fane . . . . .	1650 ?	—

## ALPHABETICAL LIST OF POETS,

FROM WHOSE WORKS EXTRACTS HAVE BEEN GIVEN IN  
THESE VOLUMES : WITH THEIR TITLES AND ACADEMI-  
CAL DEGREES.

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# HISTORICAL SKETCH

OF THE

## RISE AND PROGRESS OF THE ENGLISH POETRY AND LANGUAGE.

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### CHAPTER I.

INTRODUCTORY REMARKS ON LANGUAGE.—ON THE POETRY  
OF THE ANGLO-SAXONS.—SPECIMEN OF SAXON POETRY.

THERE is, perhaps, no species of reading so popular as that which presents a description of manners and customs considerably different from our own ; and it is the frequency of such pictures, interspersed in the relations of voyages and travels, that principally recommends them to notice, and explains the avidity with which they are usually received by the public. But, as the pleasure we derive from this source must be proportionate to the degree of interest which we take in the persons described, it is probable that a series of the works of our own ancestors, and particularly of their poetry, which, whatever may be its defects, is sure to exhibit the most correct and lively delineation of contemporary manners, would attract very general notice, if it were not considered, by the greater number of readers, as a hopeless attempt, to search for these sources of amusement and

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information, amidst the obscurity of a difficult and almost unintelligible language.

To appreciate this difficulty is one of the objects of the present sketch : it may, therefore, be proper, for the benefit of the unlearned reader, to preface it by a few general remarks on this part of the subject.

It is well known that our English is a compound of the Anglo-Saxon, (previously adulterated with a mixture of the Danish,) and of the Norman-French : but the proportion in which these elements were combined, at any period of our history, cannot be very easily ascertained. Hickes is of opinion, that no less than nine-tenths of our present English words are of Saxon origin ; as a familiar proof of which he observes, that there are in the Lord's Prayer only three words of French or Latin extraction. On the other hand, Mr. Tyrwhitt contends that, about the time of Chaucer, "though the *form* of our language was still Saxon, the *matter* was, in a *great measure*, French." These opinions, indeed, relate to such different periods, that they are not, strictly speaking, capable of being opposed to each other ; but it is nearly evident that both are exaggerated : Dr. Hickes having probably imagined that he saw traces of a Gothic etymology in words which were, in fact, purely French ; while Mr. Tyrwhitt, being misled by his own glossary of *obsolete* words, (in which the two languages are pretty nearly balanced,) has neglected to observe that the greater part of his author's text, which required no explanation, was almost solely derived from the Saxon. But, be the proportion what it may, it should seem that we ought to possess in the various existing glossaries of the Gothic and Romance dialects, the means of recovering nearly all the original materials of our language.

It is true that these materials, in passing from the parent tongues into English, are likely to have undergone considerable changes in their appearance : it may, there-

fore, be worth while to examine for a moment the probable nature and extent of these alterations.

Dr. Adam Smith, in his very ingenious essay on the formation of languages, has observed, that the order in which the several kinds of words (or parts of speech) were invented, may fairly be inferred from the degree of reasoning and abstraction which was necessary to their invention ; that it was a much simpler expedient to represent what grammarians call the cases of nouns, and the moods and tenses of verbs, by varying their terminations and inflections, than to invent prepositions expressive of relation in general, or auxiliary verbs conveying the very abstract ideas of existence, possession, &c., and, consequently, that all original languages will be found to be very complicated in their mechanism, and full of varieties of termination and grammatical intricacy, but extremely limited in the number of their elementary and radical words.

But although the speech of any nation, in which the paucity of its distinct words is thus supplied by the number of their inflections, may become perfectly applicable to every purpose, it is evident that two such languages cannot easily be amalgamated, because the radical words in each, having been arbitrarily chosen, will probably be very different ; their respective schemes of grammar will have been formed on different analogies ; and, consequently, the number of declensions and conjugations resulting from a mixture of the two would be almost infinite. When, therefore, a very close intercourse takes place between the natives of two countries, in consequence of their commercial pursuits, or the operations of war and conquest, it is likely that they will be under the necessity of forming an intermediate language, whose grammatical construction shall be so simple as to be capable of admitting indifferently, from either of the component parts, as many words as it may from time to

time become convenient to adopt. And observation will soon teach them, that this simplicity is easily attainable by means of the prepositions and auxiliary verbs, which are capable of being substituted for all the varieties of the ancient declensions and conjugations.

Whether this theory be universally true or not, it is perfectly evident that the expedient here mentioned has been adopted in the formation of all the mixed European languages; from the Latin (which is supposed to be a compound of the Greek and ancient Tuscan), to that *lingua-franca*, of which the various dialects are spoken along both coasts of the Mediterranean: and that in Italy, France, and England, the scheme and mechanism of grammar has become progressively more simple, in proportion to the number of heterogeneous parts of which the respective languages have been composed.

It is remarkable that Dr. Johnson, though he has noticed, and even accurately described the gradations by which the Saxon was insensibly melted into the English language, has considered the cause of these changes as inexplicable. "The adulteration of the Saxon tongue," says he, "by a mixture of the Norman, becomes apparent; yet it is not so much changed by the admixture of new words, which might be imputed to commerce with the Continent, as by *changes of its own form and terminations; for which no reason can be given.*" The reader, however, who shall take even a cursory survey of the extracts which gave rise to this remark, will probably be convinced, that these changes in the Saxon consist solely in the extinction of its ancient grammatical inflections, and that they are exactly similar to the alterations by which the Latin was gradually transformed into the several Romance dialects.

But it is evident that, although the new scheme of grammar was perfectly simple, and composed of few elements, yet the precise and definite use of those elements

could not be suddenly established. In employing our prepositions, for instance, though we are seldom aware of the nice shades of discrimination which we observe, till the remark is forced upon us by some striking violation of the usual practice, it is certain that mere reasoning and analogy would prove very insufficient guides. When our neighbours the Scots talk of going *till* instead of *to* a place, or of asking a question *at* rather than *of* a man, we are immediately startled, without reflecting that our own practice is only founded on convention and habit. Amongst our elder writers the use of the prepositions was, as might be expected, extremely vague and indefinite.

With the auxiliary verbs there was less difficulty ; indeed the Normans, having only two words of this class, were accustomed to apply them to a greater variety of purposes than was usual with the Saxons. Hence perhaps arose the transitive use of the verb *do*, which is so frequent in our early writers ; as in *do make* (*faire faire*), &c. ; and the old Scottish poets carry their imitation of the French still farther, so as to use *doing make* ; *done make*, &c., an employment of the verb which I do not recollect to have seen in English.

It is unnecessary to pursue these remarks any farther, because the reader will find, in Mr. Tyrwhitt's "Essay on the Language and Versification of Chaucer," a complete analysis of our grammar, as it subsisted during the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. Indeed, from what has been already premised, we are perhaps authorized to conclude that, notwithstanding the pretended fluctuation of speech, a fluctuation which has been oftener supposed than proved<sup>1</sup>, the great body of our language has conti-

<sup>1</sup> It is well known that the Welsh soldiers who served in our army at the siege of Belleisle (in the war of 1756), found little difficulty in understanding the language of the Bretons. The Slavonian sailors, employed on board of Venetian ships in the Russian

nued, with very few material or intrinsic alterations, from its first formation to the present hour : and that, if the study of our early writers be attended with considerable difficulty and embarrassment, these are principally to be attributed to a cause very distinct from the mere influx of new, or changes in the structure of old words.

The Saxon alphabet may be supposed to have been tolerably well suited to its purposes, as it contained five-and-twenty letters, besides a certain number of points, or accents, which are generally supposed to have been employed for the purpose of fixing the prosody, and distinguishing the short from the long vowels. These accents, however, together with those minute delicacies of pronunciation which they were intended to represent, gradually fell into disuse, when the language became corrupted, first by the Danish, and afterwards by the Norman invasion : and it is to be observed that the many new sounds which, at the latter of these periods, were introduced into the language, were by no means accompanied by a correspondent number of new and distinctive signs, because the French or Latin alphabet was already familiar to the Saxons, who had adopted many of its letters, on account of their superior beauty, as early as the time of Alfred.

It has been observed by those writers who have particularly directed their attention to this subject, that, in the present state of our language, we have no less than thirteen distinct vowel sounds, and twenty-one modifications of those sounds, making in all thirty-four, which we

trade, never fail to recognize a kindred dialect on their arrival at St. Petersburg. Many more examples might be adduced, to show that the language of a country is never destroyed, but by the annihilation of its inhabitants, nor materially changed, but by their amalgamation with some other people. Indeed, all over the world, children endeavour to speak like their parents, and it may be presumed that they seldom fail in the attempt.

express, as well as we can, by six-and-twenty letters ; but at an earlier period of our language, when the spelling of the Norman words was intended to convey the Norman pronunciation, the deficiency of adequate signs must have been still more sensibly felt ; so that our ancestors, finding it absolutely impossible to adopt any consistent mode of orthography, fairly left it to the discretion or caprice of the several writers and transcribers.

Chaucer, it seems, was perfectly aware of this inconvenience. In his address to his book he says,

“ And, for there is so great diversité  
In English, and in writing of our tongue,  
So pray I to God that none mis-write thee,  
Ne thee mis-metre for default of tongue :  
And, read whereso thou be, or elles sung,  
*That thou be understand, God I beseech !*”

Troilus and Cress., end of book v.

It was easier to prefer a prayer, than to suggest any human means of accomplishing the object of his wishes.

The veil which obscures the writings of our early poets cannot now be wholly removed : and perhaps, among the admirers of antiquity, there may be some who would regret its removal ; because, like other veils, it leaves much to the imagination. But the present trivial work having been compiled for the convenience of indolent and cursory readers, it appeared necessary to adopt, as generally as possible, in all the extracts which are hereafter given, the orthography of the present day ; not as being quite rational (which it certainly is not), but as being in some degree consistent, and fixed by custom and authority. Those obsolete words which, having been long since elbowed out of the language by French, or Latin, or Greek substitutes, were not reducible to any definite mode of spelling ;—those which, having undergone a change in their vowel sounds, or in their number of syllables, could



not be reformed without disturbing the rhyme or metre ; —and those which were so far disguised as to offer no certain meaning, have been left to that fortuitous combination of letters which the original transcribers or printers had assigned to them. Such are printed in italics, for the purpose of more easy reference to the glossarial notes, in which their meaning is explained or conjectured.

After these short preliminary observations on the language of our ancestors, it becomes necessary to say a few words concerning their poetry. This, in its spirit and character, seems to have resembled those Runic odes so admirably imitated by Mr. Gray ; but its mechanism and scheme of versification, notwithstanding all the pains which Hickes has employed in attempting to investigate them, are still completely inexplicable. Mr. Tyrwhitt has justly observed, that we do not discover in the specimens of Anglo-Saxon poetry preserved by Hickes any very studied attempts at alliteration (a species of ornament probably introduced by the Danes), nor the embellishment of rhyme, nor a metre depending on a fixed and determinate number of syllables, nor that marked attention to their quantity which Hickes supposed to have constituted the distinction between verse and prose. Indeed, it may be observed, in addition to the arguments adduced by Mr. Tyrwhitt, that as the distinctive character of the Greek and Latin prosody was obliterated by the invasion of the northern nations, it is not probable that the original poetry of these nations should have been founded on a similar prosody ; particularly, as the harmony of all the modern languages depends much more upon *accent* and *emphasis*, that is to say, upon changes in the tone or in the strength of the voice, than upon *quantity*, by which is meant the length of time employed in pronouncing the syllables. Upon the whole, it must still remain a doubt, whether the Anglo-Saxon verses were

strictly metrical, or whether they were only distinguished from prose by some species of rhythm : to a modern reader it will certainly appear that there is no other criterion but that which is noticed by Mr. Tyrwhitt, namely, "*a greater pomp of diction, and a more stately kind of march.*" The variety of inflection, by which the Anglo-Saxon language was distinguished from the modern English, gave to their poets an almost unlimited power of inversion ; and they used it almost without reserve : not so much perhaps for the purpose of varying the cadence of their verse, as with a view to keep the attention of their hearers upon the stretch by the artificial obscurity of their style ; and to astonish them by those abrupt transitions which are very commonly (though rather absurdly) considered as Pindaric, and which are the universal characteristic of savage poetry.

That the reader may be enabled to judge for himself concerning the truth of all the foregoing observations, he is here presented with a specimen of Anglo-Saxon poetry. The only liberty which has been taken with it, is that of substituting the common characters instead of the Saxon ; and a literal translation is added, for the purpose of showing the variety of inversions in which the Saxon poets so much delighted. But as such a translation is very ill calculated to convey the spirit of a poetical original, I am happy in being enabled, by the kindness of a friend, to subjoin a second and a metrical version. This was written several years ago, during the controversy occasioned by the poems attributed to Rowley, and was intended as an imitation of the style and language of the fourteenth century. The reader will probably hear with some surprise, that this singular instance of critical ingenuity was the composition of an Eton school-boy.

## An Ode on Athelstan's Victory,

From Two MSS. in the Cottonian Library, British Museum, Tiberius, B. iv. and Tiberius, A. vi. dated 937 in Gibson's Chronicle, and in Hickes's Saxon Grammar 938, and supposed to be written by a contemporary Bard.

### SAXON ORIGINAL.

Her Æthelstan cyning,  
 Eorla drihten,  
 Beorna beah<sup>1</sup> gifa<sup>2</sup>,  
 And his brothor eac,  
 Eadmund Ætheling<sup>3</sup>,  
 Ealdor langne tyr<sup>4</sup>,  
 Geslogon æt sæcce,  
 Sweorda ecgum,  
 Ymbe Brunanburh.  
 Heord weal clufan,  
 Heowan heatholinda,

<sup>1</sup> *Ballice* is boldly, Mark xv. 43, in the Rushworth Gloss., and *bealh* varies little in sound from *beah*.

<sup>2</sup> Whiter, in his Etymol., p. 347, gives *gevar*, Chaldaic, and thence deduces our corresponding *chief*, *captain*, &c. *g* and *c* are certainly letters of the same organ; and in Saxon *cafre* and *cafost*, are chief, chiefest; and Matt. xxvii. 57, Gothic, *gabigs* is applied to Joseph of Arimathea, an honourable man.

This celebrated ODE is rendered into English as literally as possible, to show the very great affinity between our present language and its Saxon forefather, which, it is hoped, will be admitted as an excuse for some occasional obscurity.

## LITERAL RENDERING.

Here Athelstan King,  
Of Earls the Lord,  
Of Barons the bold chief,  
And his brother eke,  
Edmund Atheling,  
Elders a long train,  
Slew in the shock (*of war*)  
With the edges of swords  
Round Brunanburgh.  
They cloven the hard walls,  
They hew the lofty ones,

<sup>3</sup> *Æthel*, *hæleth*, *hælettan*, *cilt*, *clyto*, on Mr. Whiter's elementary principle, are all deducible from *l*, *t*, disregarding the vowels, and the Latin *altus*, *inclytus*, Greek *κλυτος*, our exalted, lofty, &c. *Ætheling* is the young *Æthel*, or noble.

<sup>4</sup> *Thrym*, derived from *turma*, is a common term for a train, and the Saxons sometimes added, frequently omitted, the *m* final; and in English *tier*, as tier of guns, a row, a long line of ancestors.

Ha mera <sup>5</sup> lafum,  
Eaforan Eadwardes.

Swa him gaæthele <sup>6</sup> wæs,  
Fram cneo <sup>7</sup> mægum,  
Thæt hi æt campe oft  
With lathra <sup>8</sup> gehwæne <sup>9</sup>  
Land geal <sup>1</sup> godon <sup>2</sup>;  
Hord and hamas  
Heted crungon <sup>3</sup>.

Scotta leode <sup>4</sup>  
And scip flotan  
Fæge feollon.  
Feld dernode,  
Secga <sup>5</sup> swate,  
Siththan sunne up  
On morgen tid;  
Mære tungol  
Glad ofer grundas,  
Godes candel beorht,

<sup>5</sup> The *marches* of Wales and the North of England elucidate this term to an English reader, but it is derived from the Gothic markos, Matt. ix. 34, where *mær* is the corresponding Saxon, and signifies *marks* defining boundaries.

<sup>6</sup> *Th* and *d* are the same letter in Saxon; and in Cædmon, whose style alone resembles this Ode, there is *adaled*, portioned, destined, and *dal*, Saxon, and *dalgs*, Gothic, are common terms for *portion*, or *lot*, synonymous with the modern *deal*.

<sup>7</sup> This word corresponds with *cyn*, *genus*, and certainly the *knees* of Gibson conveys no appropriate idea.

The marches (*borders*) they leave,  
As aforen in Edward's days.

So to them it destined was  
From their mighty kindred,  
That they at camp oft  
'Gainst robbers on each side  
Their land wholly cleared ;  
Their hoards and homes  
Nobly ruling.

The Scottish lads  
And the men of the fleet  
In fight fell.  
The field dinned,  
The soldiers swat,  
Sith that the sun up  
On morning tide ;  
The major twinkler  
Glided over the grounds,  
God's candle bright,

<sup>8</sup> The Latin *latro*.

<sup>9</sup> Each whence, literally.

<sup>1</sup> *Geall* is *all*, in the Lambeth Psalter, Ps. lxx. 15.

<sup>2</sup> *Geaton* is found for *to get*, in the Saxon Chronicle, An. 655.  
675. 963.

<sup>3</sup> This may be derived from *raginon*, regere, Goth. Luc. ii. 2.

<sup>4</sup> This word is retained in the English *lad*, and the Scotch *laddies*.

<sup>5</sup> General name for soldiers ; and our old English word *segge*,  
*a man*.

Eces drihtnes,  
 Oth se æthele gesceaft<sup>6</sup>  
 Sahto setle.

Thær læg secg monig,  
 Garum ageted<sup>7</sup>,  
 Guman<sup>8</sup> northærne  
 Ofer scyld sceoten,  
 Swylce Scyttisc eac  
 Werig wiges read<sup>9</sup>.

Wes-Seaxe forth,  
 Andlangne dæg,  
 Eored cystum,  
 On last lægdon  
 Lathum theodum.  
 Heowan heora flyman,  
 Hindan thearle<sup>1</sup>  
 Mecum<sup>2</sup> mycel scearpum.

Myrce ne wyrndon<sup>3</sup>  
 Heardes hand to plegan<sup>4</sup>.

<sup>6</sup> Whatever is created, shaped.

<sup>7</sup> *Ageotenne*, Ps. xiii. 6, where the Trinity College MS. has *scedende to shed*, to go out; Gothic, *giutid*.

<sup>8</sup> *Ghomo*, homo, pronounced with their favourite *g*, or *ge*; in Gothic, Luc. xix. 2, *guma*.

<sup>9</sup> The MS. Tiberius, A. vi. gives *read*, not *sæd*, the printed reading.

<sup>1</sup> Here to *thrill*, or *drill*, as Exod. xxi. 6 *thirlie his eare mid*

Eke so the Lord's,  
Until this handy-work of the high  
Sought his setting.

There lay soldiers many,  
Their gore flowing out,  
Northern men  
Over their shields shot,  
So Scottish men eke,  
Red with worrying war.

The West-Saxon forth (*army*)  
All the long day,  
(A chosen herd,)  
On the last laid  
Of the loathed people,  
They hew their fleeing men,  
The hind ones pierce  
With swords mickle sharp.

The Mercians (*were*) not wearied  
Hard hands to ply.

*anum æle*, "drill his ear with an awl," a custom retained by our forefathers, and executed on their slaves at the church door.

<sup>2</sup> The Trinity College MS. supplies us with the derivation of this word, Ps. xvi. 14, giving *meche* where another has *sword*: the first syllable of the Greek *μαχαίρα* or *μαχη*.

<sup>3</sup> Bede uses the word in this sense, 533, 31.

<sup>4</sup> Alfred, in his translation of Boethius, gives *plegian*, to brandish.



Hæleth a nanuſm  
 Thæra the mid Anlafe  
 Ofer Mæra gebland <sup>5</sup>,  
 On lides <sup>6</sup> bosme,  
 Land gesohton,  
 Fæge to feohte.

Fife lagon  
 On tham campstede  
 Cyningas iunga  
 Swordum aswefede <sup>7</sup>.

Swylce seofene eac  
 Eorlas Anlafes.  
 Unrim <sup>8</sup> herges <sup>9</sup>  
 Flotan and Scotta  
 Thær geflymed wearth.

Northmanna bregu <sup>1</sup>  
 Neade gebæded  
 To lides <sup>2</sup> stæfne <sup>3</sup>  
 Litle weorode <sup>4</sup>

<sup>5</sup> *Geblew*, Rushworth Gloss. John xx. 22.

<sup>6</sup> This probably is an error for *ythe*, the common word for waves.

<sup>7</sup> *Swebban*, Cædmon; *b*, *f*, and *p*, are letters of the same organ, and *asurpan*, swept away, Lye. The Greek, π, β, φ.

<sup>8</sup> *Unrim*, unnumbered, from *innumerus*; *n*, *r*, *m*, the commanding consonants, the same as *rim* is *numerus*, the termination *us* dropped.

<sup>9</sup> This word implies *Harassers*, according to Lye, from *hergian*, to harrow. The Gothic *hargis*, a legion.

Health aye (*was*) none  
To them who with Anlaf  
Over the seas blown were,  
On the bosom of the waves,  
The land they sought,  
Foe to fight.

Five lay  
On the camp-stead  
Of kings the young  
By swords swept away.

So seven eke  
The earls of Anlaf.  
Unnumbered harassers  
Of the fleet and Scots  
There to flee made were.

Of North-men the terror,  
By need forced, bidden  
With a loud stefen (*voice*)  
His remaining warriors

<sup>1</sup> This word proves, beyond the possibility of doubt, that *b* and *f* are used indiscriminately by Saxon writers; for *bregyd* is frequently used for *fregyth*, *frighted*, here literally the *frighter*, as in the Gothic, Mar. v. 42, *faurhte*.

<sup>2</sup> *Luddor* is louder, Chr. Sax. An. 654, though *lud* is more generally transmitted with the aspirate *h*, *hlud*.

<sup>3</sup> *Steven* is a common term for *voice*, even in Chaucer.

<sup>4</sup> The modern *warred*, engaged in *waging* war. Vide *weored*, Lye's Dictionary.

Cread<sup>5</sup> cnear on  
 Flot cyning,  
 Utgewat on feolene<sup>6</sup> flod<sup>7</sup>,  
 Feorh generode<sup>8</sup>.

Swilce thær eac se froda<sup>9</sup>  
 Mid fleame com on his cyththe  
 Nordh Constantinus.  
 Har Hylderinc,  
 Hryman ne thorfte,  
 Mecga gemanan  
 He wæs his mæga.

Sceard freonda  
 Gefylled on folc-stede,  
 Forebeslagen æt sæcge.  
 And his sunu forlæt  
 On wæl stowe,  
 Wundum forgrunden.

Geongne Ætguthe  
 Gylpan ne thorfte  
 Beorn bland en-feax  
 Bill gislihtes,  
 Eald in wuda.

<sup>5</sup> *Cread*, a crowd, Lye; here used as a verb.

<sup>6</sup> *Feoll*, fell. Deut. ix. 18.

<sup>7</sup> Luc. vi. 49, *flod*, Sax.—Goth. *aqua flodar*.

For to crowd near on  
The fleet of the king,  
Out-going on falling flood,  
Far escaped.

So there eke the prudent  
With flight came to his country  
The northern Constantine.  
The hoary Hilderic,  
To scream not throve it, (*availed not*,)  
Much bemoan  
He did his mates.

Short (*few*) friends  
Filled his folk-stead,  
Fore-slain they were at the shock.  
And his son was left  
On the wailful stow, (*field*,)  
With wounds weltering on the ground.

The young Ætguth  
To bewail availed not  
His barons bold in fight,  
Slaughtered by the bill,  
Old in wisdom.

\* *Gener* is the general term for a place of refuge.

\* *Froda* is the Gothic *frods*, Matt. vii. 24, the Latin *prudens*,  
*p* changed into *f*—*f*, *r*, *d*, *s*, commanding consonants.

Ne Anlaf the ma,  
 Mid hyra here leafum,  
 Hlihhan ne thorftan,  
 Thæt hi beado <sup>1</sup> weorca  
 Beteran wurdon  
 On camp-stede.

Cumbol <sup>2</sup> gehnastes,  
 Gar <sup>3</sup> mittunge <sup>4</sup>  
 Gumena gemotes,  
 Wæpen gewrixles <sup>5</sup>  
 Thæs the hi on wæl felda  
 With ead <sup>6</sup> weardes  
 Afaran plegodon.

Gewiton <sup>7</sup> him tha Northmen,  
 Dæggled on garum,  
 Dreorig dare tha laf.  
 On duniges mere,  
 Ofer deopne wæter,  
 Dyflen secan,  
 Eft yra land,  
 Æwi scamode.

<sup>1</sup> *Bate* is the term of contention ; and *beat*, to beat.

<sup>2</sup> *Cumbol*, sounds as *symbol*, assembly.

<sup>3</sup> *Gar* is *great*, as *gar segg*, Oros. i. l, the ocean, *great sea*.

<sup>4</sup> *Mittunge* and *gemotis* are from the same source, the Gothic *notastada*, Luc. v. 27, the *Moot-stadt*, place of meeting.

<sup>5</sup> This is generally used for *exchange*, and is the word in that

Nor Anlaf the more,  
With the left (*remainder*) of the army,  
To laugh not throve it<sup>6</sup>,  
That they battles work  
Better wrought  
In camp-stead.

At assembly the nighest,  
The great meeting  
Of the men of the motes<sup>7</sup>,  
Weep the ransoms  
Of those that they on wail-field  
Guarded by an oath  
Aforen pledged.

Quit them the Northmen  
With tackled gear, (*with sails repaired*),  
Dreary those the left, (*the remainder*.)  
On the dingy sea,  
Over deep waters,  
Dublin they seek,  
Afterwards their land,  
Each were shamed.

passage of the Evangelist, "what shall a man give in *exchange* for his soul?" Matt. xvi. 26. Mark viii. 37.

<sup>6</sup> *Ead*, an *eath*, an oath.

<sup>7</sup> This word pronounced sounds as *quitten*.

<sup>8</sup> To laugh, to boast, availed not.

<sup>9</sup> Ward-motes is still in constant use to express a meeting of the principal inhabitants of the ward.

Swylce tha gebrothor<sup>1</sup>,  
 Bege ætrunne<sup>2</sup>  
 Cyning and Eatheling,  
 Cyththe sohton,  
 West-Seaxna land.

Wiges hremige  
 Læton him behindan.  
 Hra Bryttinga,  
 Salowig padan,  
 Thone sweartan hræfn  
 Hynet nebban,  
 And thone hasu-wadan earn  
 Æftan hwit æses brucan,  
 Grædigne cuth haofoc,  
 And thæt grege deor,  
 Wulf on wealde.

Ne wearth wæl mare  
 On thisne iglande,  
 (Æfre gita  
 Folces gefylled)  
 Beforan thyssum  
 Sweordes ecgum,  
 (Thæs the us secgath<sup>4</sup> bec  
 Ealde uth witan,)

<sup>1</sup> *Gedecan* is to deck, thatch, cover.

<sup>2</sup> Gibson reads *æt sunne*, but *Tiberius*, A. vi. *ætrunne*, togetheren.

<sup>3</sup> That builds his house in the loftiest woods.

So also the brothers,  
Both together  
The King and Atheling,  
Their country sought,  
West-Saxon land.

The war screamers  
Left they behind ;  
The hoarse bittern,  
The sallow paddock,  
The swarth raven  
With horned nib,  
And the house-wooding<sup>4</sup> heron  
Eating white fish of the brooks,  
The greedy gos-hawk,  
The grey deer,  
And wolf wild.

Never was there wail more  
In this island,  
(Ever since  
By folks filled)  
Before this  
By sword's edge,  
(Thus they that seek books,  
Elders of the witens<sup>5</sup>.)

<sup>4</sup> This rendering is confirmed by the Heptateuch of Thwaites, p. 162.

<sup>5</sup> Thus it is related by the Clerks, the learned.



Siththan eastan hider,  
Engle and Seaxe,  
Up becomon.  
Ofer brade briniu,  
Britene sohton.  
Wlance wig smithas  
Wealas ofer comon,  
Eorlas arhwæte,  
Eard begeaton.

Since that the easterns hither,  
Angles and Saxons,  
Up became (*arrived*).  
Over the broad brine (*sea*)  
Britain they sought.  
Smiting with lances  
The Welch they conquered,  
The earls harrowed,  
The earth gotten (*the land obtained*).

## METRICAL VERSION OF THE FOREGOING POEM.

The mightiest of alle manne  
Was the gude king Athelstan.  
Alle his knytis to hir medis  
Weren riche and ryal wedis.  
Edmond, his brother, was a knyht  
Comelich, brave, and fair to syht.  
At Brunenbruc in stour they faught ;  
Fiercer fray was never wraught.  
Maille was split, and helmis roven,  
The wall of shieldis down they cloven.  
The Thanis which cold with Edmond fare  
To meet the foemen well were yare :  
For it was comen to hem of kynde  
Hir londis and tresours to fend.

The kempis, whych was of Irlond,  
On ilka daie, on ilka strond,  
Weted with blude, and wounded, fell  
Rapely smatin with the stell.  
Grislich on the grund they groned ;  
Aboven, alle the hyls resounded.  
What for labour, and what for hete,  
The kempis swate til they wer wete.  
From morrow til the close of day  
Was the tyme of that journee.

Monie mon from Dacie sprong  
The deth tholid, I underfong.  
The Scottis fell in that bataille,  
Whyche wer forwerid of travaille.  
The West Sexonis wer ware  
When their foen away wold fare ;  
As they fled they did hem sewe  
Wyth ghazed swerdis, that wel couth hew.  
The cokins they n'olden staie,  
For thir douten of that fraye.

The Mercians fought I understand ;  
There was gamen of the hond.  
Alle that with Anlaff hir way nom  
Over the seas in the shippes wome,  
And the five sonnes of the kynge  
Fel mid dint of swerd fightinge.  
His seven erlis died alswo ;  
Many Scottes wer killed tho.  
The Normannes, for their migty bost,  
Went hame with a lytyl host.

The kynge and frode syked sore  
For hir kempis whyche wer forlore.  
The kynge and frode to schyppe gan flee  
Wyth mickel haste, but her meguie.  
Constantine gude and Anlaff  
Lytyl bost hadde of the laif.  
Maie he nat glosen, ne saie

But he was right wel appaie.  
In Dacie of that gaming  
Monie wemen hir hondis wring.  
The Normannes passed that rivere  
Mid hevy hart and sory chere.  
The brothers to Wessex yode,  
Leving the crowen, and the tode,  
Hawkes, doggis, and wolves tho,  
Egles, and monie other mo,  
With the ded men for their mede,  
On hir corses for to fede.

Sen the Saxonis first come  
In schippes over the sea-fome,  
Of the yeres that ben forgone,  
Greater bataile was never none.

## CHAPTER II.

THE SAME SUBJECT CONTINUED.—ACCOUNT OF NORMAN  
POETS IN ENGLAND.

It has been seen that, although the great mass of our language is derived from our Anglo-Saxon ancestors, the mechanism and structure of our poetry is to be referred to some other source; and it is generally supposed that all the modes of versification now in use were borrowed from the French, who appear to have adopted them, together with the ornament of rhyme, in imitation of the Latin monkish versifiers. To whom we should ascribe the original invention of this ornament is not quite so certain. Fauchet claims it for his countrymen; but, as he founds their pretensions on the Frankish translation of the Scriptures by Otfrid, a monk of Weissembourg, who wrote about the year 870, succeeding antiquaries have opposed to this authority the superior antiquity of the Latin specimens, some of which are to be referred to the sixth century. This date is certainly anterior even to any that can be assigned to the Runic ode, called Elgill's Ransom, which has been translated by Dr. Percy in his specimens of Runic poetry, and which affords, perhaps, the earliest example of rhyme in any modern language. But, on the other hand, it may be fairly argued, that, as our stock of northern literature is very incomplete, we cannot draw any positive conclusion from the deficiency of specimens among the works of the Scalds;—that rhyme, which certainly is not congenial to Latin verse, may have been a natural appendage to a system of versification less strictly metrical;—and that, as the date of

its original introduction into Latin can only be conjectured, it is not more absurd to ascribe it to some northern proselyte, desirous of bestowing on the learned language an ornament which he admired in his own, than to suppose it was invented by the Italian monks, as a succedaneum for that regular prosody, the harmony of which had been lost in the corrupt pronunciation of the barbarous conquerors of Italy.

But, be this as it may, the Norman poets were certainly our immediate masters : to them we owe the forms of our verse ; and translations from them were among the earliest compositions of the English language ; so that some notice of them is necessary to connect the links of our literary history.

Indeed it has not been sufficiently considered, that there was a period, and that of considerable duration, during which the English language did not exist, or at least was not, and could not be, applicable to any literary purpose. The language of the church was Latin ; that of the king and nobles, Norman ; that of the people, Anglo-Saxon : the Anglo-Norman jargon was only employed in the commercial intercourse between the conquerors and the conquered. It was likely to be composed almost entirely of synonymous terms, which evidently can only incumber, without enriching the speech of any nation ; and that this was the case, is proved by our existing language, in which the names of the necessaries of life, as ox and beef, sheep and mutton, flesh and meat, besides many other words of frequent recurrence, had originally an identical meaning. This state of things would necessarily continue so long as the Norman and Anglo-Saxon people were separated by mutual hatred and prejudice ; and their languages could only be amalgamated into one common and consistent form of speech, when the conquerors and the conquered became confounded in the same mass, by intermarriages, and by a

general unity of interest. Hence, the Norman and Anglo-Saxon, which for some time existed in England as distinct and rival tongues, have long since disappeared ; while, from a series of opposite causes, the Welsh has continued to the present day ; and it is probable that, by a careful examination of our political and legal history alone, we might be able to trace the gradations of our language with tolerable accuracy. In the mean time it is impossible not to see that a great deal too much has been attributed to the personal character of the Conqueror, and that historians have ascribed to particular parts of his policy effects directly opposite to those which they were naturally calculated to produce.

We are told, for instance, that William hated and determined to eradicate the language of this island, and to introduce the Norman in its place ; and this has been so often repeated, that Mr. Tyrwhitt has thought it necessary to refute the assertion by the authority of Ordericus Vitalis, a contemporary historian, who tells us, that William had, in fact, taken great pains to acquire the Anglo-Saxon. But surely, the absurdity of the charge is its best refutation. William must have known, that the Franks who conquered Gaul, and his own ancestors who subdued Neustria, had not been able to substitute the Teutonic for the Romance language in their dominions ; that the measure was not at all necessary to the establishment of their power ; and that such an attempt is, in all cases, no less impracticable than absurd, because the patient indocility of the multitude must ultimately triumph over the caprice and tyranny of their armed preceptors. But, having conquered a kingdom, and wishing to retain his conquest, he introduced a code of laws which placed his power on a military basis ; and he introduced it in the language in which it was originally compiled, and which was familiar to that army to which he looked for his security. By encouraging the study of French in the



schools, he gave his subjects the means of understanding the laws which he expected them to obey. He did this, perhaps, tyrannically and harshly ; but it is not proved that he did it with the view of making the Norman the universal language of his subjects, or that he expected them, at their return from school, to talk French in their own families : he might, with equal wisdom, have supposed that they would converse habitually in Latin, which they learned in the same schools. Even during the reign of Edward the Confessor the Anglo-Saxon had ceased to be cultivated ; and after the conquest it was sure to become more and more barbarous, because it was the language of an oppressed and enslaved people ; but it continued to exist. Indeed, the obscurity of our earliest poets is well known to arise from this source ; and the subsequent influx of French words, which gradually formed the Anglo-Norman or English language, was so far from being an effect of the tyrannical policy of the Conqueror, that it was most rapid at the very period when that policy was abandoned, (that is to say, a little before the time of Minot, Gower, and Chaucer,) and was the natural result of the increasing intercourse between the Norman nobles and their English vassals.

In the mean time, the English monarchs were the most liberal, and, perhaps, the earliest patrons of French poetry : indeed we are told by a correct and diligent antiquary, M. de la Rue, Royal Professor of History in the University of Caen, (See *Archæologia*, vol. xii. pages 50 and 297, for his able dissertations on this subject,) that IT WAS FROM ENGLAND AND NORMANDY THAT THE FRENCH RECEIVED THE FIRST WORKS WHICH DESERVE TO BE CITED IN THEIR LANGUAGE. The historians of Provence have assigned to the first specimens of their poetry a very high degree of antiquity ; but La Combe, in his short account of the French poets prefixed to the second volume of his *Dictionnaire du Vieux Langage*,

supposes the earliest troubadours of eminence, WILLIAM COUNT OF POITIERS, and RAYMOND COUNT OF THOULOUSE, to have flourished in 1071 and 1092, so that the only known poet confessedly anterior to the reign of William the Conqueror, is THIBAUT DE VERNON, Canon of Rouen, who translated from Latin into French verse the *lives of Wandril and some other Saints* held in reverence by the Normans.

The next names with which we become acquainted, are those of the minstrel TAILLEFER, who is said to have been the first person that broke into the English ranks at the battle of Hastings ; and of BERDIC, another French minstrel attached to the Conqueror, by whom he was rewarded with the gift of three parishes in Gloucestershire. The succeeding reign was principally distinguished by numbers of *serventois*, or satirical songs, from which it is not improbable that Robert of Gloucester may have borrowed his sarcasms against William Rufus : but we do not possess any monuments of the poetry of this early period, nor have the names of the writers been transmitted to posterity.

The first Anglo-Norman poet mentioned by M. de la Rue, is PHILIPPE DE THAN. He composed, for the use of the clergy, a didactic French poem, under the title of "*Liber de Creaturis* ;" it is a treatise of practical chronology, full of erudition, and dedicated to his uncle, Humphrey de Than, Chaplain to Hugh Bigod, who became Seneschal to Henry I. in the year 1107, soon after which the poem appears to have been written. His next work is entitled *Le Bestiare*, dedicated to Adelaide de Louvain, who was married to Henry I. in 1121, so that the poem must have been written after that time. It is a treatise on beasts, birds, and precious stones, translated from a Latin essay called *Bestiarium*, a manuscript copy of which still remains in the library of Mr. Douce, F.A.S. Both these works are to be found in the British Museum,

MSS. Cotton, Nero, A. v. "With respect to the kind of poetry which Phillippe de Than has used, (says M. de la Rue,) we believe it would be difficult to find any authors who have adopted it. His method does not consist in making one line rhyme with another, but one half with the other half, as,

"Al busuin est trued, l'amie é eprued,  
Unches ne fud ami, qui al busuign failli," &c.

But this mechanism of verse, which he borrowed from the Latin versifiers of his time, and in which he has had no imitators among the French poets, became very popular among the English. It is adopted in the old metrical tale of King Horn, and in many other works. Indeed, if we write the two hemistichs as separate verses, we obtain that form of verse of which Skelton was so fond, and which, from its frequent application to metrical romances, was usually called the minstrel-metre.

SAMSON DE NANTEUIL translated *the Proverbs of Solomon* into French verse, at the instance of Adelaide de Condé, whom he calls his *lady*. She was wife of Osbert de Condé, and proprietor of Horn-castle in Lincolnshire, which was forfeited to the crown in the last year of Stephen's reign. The composition of the poem was probably, by a few years, anterior to this event. It is written in eight-syllable verse, and is to be found in the British Museum, MSS. Harl., No. 4388.

GEOFFROI GAIMAR is known by a *metrical History of the Anglo-Saxon Kings* continued to the reign of William Rufus. This however is apparently only part of a larger work, comprehending the whole history of Britain; since the author declares that he had begun his poem with the Argonautic expedition, and had amended and corrected the work of Geoffrey of Monmouth, by means of two MSS. which he cites. It appears, from clear internal evidence, that this work must have been written as early

as the year 1146. It is in verses of eight syllables, which possess uncommon facility and elegance. The only known copy is in the British Museum, Bibl. Reg. 13, A. xxi., in which it is placed as a continuation of Wace's *Brut d'Angleterre*.

DAVID is mentioned by Gaimar as his contemporary, and as a *trouveur* of considerable eminence; but his works are now lost.

The next poet in the order of time is the celebrated *Maistre WACE*: he was a native of Jersey, born in the reign of Henry I., whom he professes to have seen. He commenced his studies at Caen, and returned thither after having completed his education in France. The order of time in which he composed his several works cannot be correctly ascertained, but it is probable that the *Brut d'Angleterre*, which he finished in the year 1155, is the earliest of those that have come down to us. It is a French metrical version of the History of Britain from the time of the imaginary Brutus to the reign of Cadwallader, A.D. 689, which Geoffrey of Monmouth had previously translated into Latin prose from the British original, given him by Walter, Archdeacon of Oxford. Layamon and Robert de Brunne made use of Wace's work for their English poetical versions; and lastly, Rusticien de Pise<sup>1</sup> translated it into French prose. There are several copies of the *Brute* still remaining; three in the British Museum, viz. Bib. Reg. 13, A. xxi., and MSS. Cott. Vitellius, A. x., both of the thirteenth century; and MSS. Harl. No. 6508, of the fourteenth: a copy (like-wise of the fourteenth century) in the library of Corpus Christi College, Cambridge; and a superb folio, supposed to be coeval with Wace, in the Royal Library at Paris.

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Ritson considers *Robert de Borron*, *Lucas*, *Rusticien de Pise*, and other pretended authors and translators whose names appear in the old prose romances, as men of straw.

Although a French quotation may have an awkward appearance in a treatise exclusively dedicated to English poetry, I shall venture to lay before my readers a specimen of Wace's *Brut*; partly for the purpose of interrupting the dry and uninteresting catalogue of names of which the present chapter is composed; and partly because this piece of imaginary history having employed the pens of so many successive writers, it may be entertaining to compare their several styles in treating the same subject. The following extract is taken from Wace's description of the ceremonies and sports at King Arthur's coronation; and the corresponding passages from Layamon, Robert of Gloucester, and Geoffrey of Monmouth, will be given in the two next chapters.

<sup>1</sup> Quand li service fut finé,  
 Et ITE MISSA EST chanté,  
 Li roi a sa corone ostée  
 Qu'il avoit au *mostier* <sup>2</sup> portée,  
 Une corone *menor* <sup>3</sup> prist:  
 Et la reine *ensement* <sup>4</sup> prist.  
 Jus mistrent les *greignors* <sup>5</sup> ators,  
 Plus legiers pristrent, et menors.  
 Quand li roi torna del *mostier*,  
 A son palais ala manger.  
 La reine à un autre ala,  
 Et les dames o *sei* <sup>6</sup> mena.

<sup>1</sup> MS. Harl. 6508.

<sup>2</sup> Monastery.

<sup>3</sup> Mineure—smaller.

<sup>4</sup> At the same time.

<sup>5</sup> Greater. They laid down their greater and heavier garments.

<sup>6</sup> O sei, avec soi.

Li roi mangea avec les homes,  
 Et la reine avec les dames,  
 O<sup>1</sup> grant *deduist*<sup>2</sup> et o grant joye,  
 Come soloit estre à Troie :  
 Et Bretons encor la tenoent,  
 Quant ensemble *feiste*<sup>3</sup> feisoent,  
 Li roi et les homes mangoent,  
 Que nule fame n' i menoent :  
 Les dames mangoent aillors,  
 N' i avoit que lor servitors.

Quant li roi fut au *deis* assiz,  
 A la costume del país,  
 Assiz sont les barons entor,  
 Chescun en l'ordre de *s'enor*<sup>4</sup>.  
 Li senescal KEI avoit nom,  
 Vestu d'un ermin pelliçon,  
 Servi à son mangier li roy,  
 Mil gentilzhomes avec soi,  
 Qui *tuiz*<sup>5</sup> furent vestus d'ermine,  
 Cil servirent à la *quesine*<sup>6</sup>.  
 Sovent aloent, et *espez*<sup>7</sup>,  
*Esqueles*<sup>8</sup> portant, et mes.  
 BEDUER, de l'autre partie,  
 Servi de la boteillerie.

<sup>1</sup> With.<sup>3</sup> Fête—feast.<sup>5</sup> Tous.<sup>6</sup> Ecuelles.<sup>8</sup> Cuisine.<sup>2</sup> Pleasure.<sup>4</sup> Son honneur—his rank.<sup>7</sup> Epais—thickly crowded.

Ensemble o li mil damoisealz,  
 Vestuz d'ermine, *genz et bealz*<sup>1</sup>,  
*O copes et o pos*<sup>2</sup> d'or fin,  
 Et o *henas*<sup>3</sup> porteient vin,  
 N'i avoit home qui servist  
 Qui d'ermine ne se vestit.  
 BEDUER devant euls aloit,  
 Que la cope li roi portoit,  
 Li damoiseals après aloent,  
 Qui les barons de vin servoent.  
 La reine *ost*<sup>4</sup> ses servanz,  
*Ne vos sai dire quels ne quanz*<sup>5</sup> ;  
 Richement et bel fut servie  
 El et toute sa compagnie.  
 Mult veisez riche vesele,  
 Qui mult *ert*<sup>6</sup> riche et mult bele,  
 Et de manger riche servise,  
 Et de *beivres*<sup>7</sup> en mainte guise,  
 Ne puis ne ne sei nomer,  
 Ne les richesses a conter.  
 Mult ost à la cort juleors,  
 Chanteors, et *rumenteors*<sup>8</sup>.  
 Mult poissez oir chançons,  
*Rotuenges*<sup>9</sup>, et *voialx*<sup>10</sup> sons,

<sup>1</sup> Gentils et beaux.      <sup>2</sup> Cups and pots.      <sup>3</sup> Hanaps—tankards.

<sup>4</sup> Eut.      <sup>5</sup> I cannot tell who, nor how many.

<sup>6</sup> Erat—was.      <sup>7</sup> Boire.      <sup>8</sup> Rhymers?

<sup>9</sup> Songs played on the *rote*. This is thought to have been the modern *vielle*, used by the Savoyards in our streets.

<sup>10</sup> *Voialx* sons, sons voyaux, probably mean *vocal* songs.

*Vileors* <sup>1</sup>, *lais*, et notez,  
*Laiz de vieles* <sup>2</sup>, *laiz de rotes* <sup>3</sup>  
*Laiz de harpez*, *laiz de freteals* <sup>4</sup>,  
*Lires* <sup>5</sup>, *timpes* <sup>6</sup>, et *chalemals*,  
*Symphoniez* <sup>7</sup>, *psalterions* <sup>8</sup>,  
*Monacordes* <sup>9</sup>, *cymbes* <sup>10</sup>, *chorons* <sup>11</sup>.  
*Assez i ot tregeiteors* <sup>12</sup>,  
*Joierrresses*, et *joieors* <sup>13</sup>;  
*Li uns disoent contes et fables*;  
*Auquant* <sup>14</sup> demandoent dez et tables.  
*Tielx joient au hasart*;  
*C'estoit un gieu de male part*.  
*As eschiez joient plusors*,  
*Ou à la mine* <sup>15</sup> *au gieu majors* <sup>16</sup>;  
*Dui et dui* <sup>17</sup> *au gieu s'escompaignent*,

<sup>1</sup> *Vileors* are probably players on the *viele* or violin.

<sup>2</sup> *Lays* accompanied by the fiddle.

<sup>3</sup> *Lays* accompanied by the *rote* or *vielle*.

<sup>4</sup> These seem to have been a sort of flute.

<sup>5</sup> Probably some variety of the harp.

<sup>6</sup> Drums.

<sup>7</sup> Another sort of drum. Vide Sir J. Hawkins, Hist. Mus. vol. ii. 284, 285.

<sup>8</sup> Dulcimers.

<sup>9</sup> The monochord.

<sup>10</sup> Cymbals.

<sup>11</sup> A sort of trumpet.

<sup>12</sup> Jugglers. See Tyrwhitt's note on v. 11453, Cant. Tales.

<sup>13</sup> Probably the *timbesteres* or *tumbesteres* mentioned by Chancer. See Tyrwhitt's Glossary: *joieors* are apparently also jugglers.

<sup>14</sup> *Aucuns*—some.

<sup>15</sup> <sup>16</sup> In the Cotton MS. Vitell. A. x., the line stands thus, "A la mine u al greignor." Both readings seem to indicate two games played with tables, and distinguished as the *greater* and the *less*; but whether they were species of backgammon or draughts is uncertain.

<sup>17</sup> Two and two.



Li uns perdent, li autres gaignent,  
 Cil enjuent qui plus getent,  
 As autres dient qu'ils y metent.  
 Sor gages empristent deniers,  
 Unze por douze volontiers.  
 Sovent jurent, sovent affichent,  
 Gages prenent, gages plenissent ;  
 Mult estrivent, mult se courroucent <sup>1</sup>.

\* \* \* \*

Telx i puest soier vestu,  
 Qui au partir se lieve nu.  
 Dona *déduis* <sup>2</sup>, dona *belez* <sup>3</sup>,  
 Dona *livriers* <sup>4</sup>, dona *brochiers* <sup>5</sup>,  
 Dona pelliçon, dona henaps,  
 Dona peilez, dona anealx,  
 Dona blianz, dona mantealx,  
 Dona lances, dona espées,  
 Dona *saites barbelées* <sup>6</sup> ;  
 Dona coivres, dona escuz,  
 Ars et espées bien esmoluz ;  
 Dona li dars, et dona ors,  
 Dona *lorains et chaceors* <sup>7</sup> ;

<sup>1</sup> I have omitted the remainder of this passage, which I thought rather tedious; perhaps, because it is not easily intelligible. The transition from this subject to Arthur's presents is rather sudden.

<sup>2</sup> Probably trinkets.

<sup>3</sup> Weasel fur.

<sup>4</sup> Liveries?

<sup>5</sup> Clasps.

<sup>6</sup> Barbed arrows.

<sup>7</sup> Lorrains are *reins*; but I do not understand which of the accompaniments of hunting was called a *chassoir*.

Dona hauberz, dona destriers,  
Dona heaumes, dona deniers ;  
Dona argent, et dona or,  
Dona le mielx de son trésor.  
N'i ost home qui rien vousist,  
Qui d'autre terre à li venist,  
Qui le roi li donast tel don,  
Qui enor fust à tel baron.  
De bons homes, et de richesse,  
Et de planté, et de largesse,  
Et de corteise, et d'enor,  
Portoist Bretagne lors la flor  
Sor tous les regnes d'environ,  
Et sor tous ceulx que nos savons.  
Plus erent cortois et vaillanz,  
N'eis li povres païsanz,  
Que chevaliers en autre regnes :  
Et autre si erent les fames.  
Ja ne veissez chevalier  
Qui de rien feist apriser,  
Que armes, et dras, et ator,  
N'en eut tout d'une color ;  
D'une color armes feisoent,  
D'une color se vestissoent.  
Si erent les dames priseez,  
D'une color appareillées.  
Ja nul chevalier n'i eust,  
De que quel parage que il fust,

Ja peust avoir druerie,  
 Ne corteisie dame à amie,  
 Se il n'eust trois fois esté  
 De chevalerie prové.  
 Li chevalers mielx en valoent,  
 Et en l'estor mieulx en fesoent,  
 Et les dames meilliores estoent,  
 Et plus chastement en vivoent.

Quand li roi leva del manger,  
 Alez sunt tuit *esbanoier* <sup>1</sup>,  
 De la cité es champs issirent ;  
 A plusors gieux se despartirent.  
 Li uns alerent *bohorder* <sup>2</sup>,  
 Et les *ineaux* <sup>3</sup> chevalx monstrent :  
 Li autres alerent escrimir,  
 Ou pierres getier, ou *saillir* <sup>4</sup>.  
 Tielx i avoit qui dars lancoent,  
 Et tielx i avoit qui lutoent ;  
 Chascun del gieu s'entremestoit,  
 Qui entremetre se savoit.  
 Cil qui son compaignon vainqueit,  
 Et qui d'aucun gieu pris avoeit,  
 Etoit sempres mené au roi,  
 Et à tous les autres monstré ;

<sup>1</sup> To amuse themselves.

<sup>3</sup> Fleet (*isnel*).

<sup>2</sup> To just.

<sup>4</sup> To leap.

Et li roi del sien li donost,  
 Tant donc cil liez s'en alost.  
 Les dames sor les murs aloent,  
 Por esgarder ceulx qui joient.  
 Qui ami avoit en la place,  
 Tout li tornost l'oil ou la face.  
 Trois jorz dura la feiste ainsi ;  
 Quand vint au quart, au mercredi,  
 Li roi ses bacheliers *fiensa* <sup>1</sup>  
*Enors deliverez devisa* <sup>2</sup>,  
 Lor servise a celx rendi,  
 Qui por terre l'orent servi :  
 Bois dona, et chasteleriez,  
 Et evesquiez, et abbaiez.  
 A ceulx qui d'autres terres estoient,  
 Qui par amor au roi venoent,  
 Dona coupes, dona destriers,  
 Dona de ses avers plus chiers, &c.

An account of this author's remaining works will be found in the note below <sup>3</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> *Fieffa*, gave fiefs.

<sup>2</sup> I cannot explain this.

<sup>3</sup> Wace's second work is a *History of the two Irruptions of the Normans into Neustria and England*. Like the Brut, it is written in verses of eight syllables, with that facility which distinguishes Wace from all his contemporaries : it is compiled from the best chronicles, and evinces an extraordinary knowledge of general history. This work is only to be found in France, where there are two ancient copies, one in the Royal, and the other in the Colbertine Library; and a modern copy by M. Lancelot, with the variations added in the margin, is also in the Royal Library.

The third poem of Wace is the famous *Roman du Rou*, that is to say, of Raoul, or Rollo, first Duke of Normandy. It was written, as Wace himself declares, in 1160, and is composed in Alexandrine

BENOIT was contemporary with Wace. M. de la Rue supposes him to be the Benoit de St. More, who wrote

verse of twelve syllables. It is annexed to the MSS. just mentioned, as are also his fourth work, which is the *Life of William Long-sword*, son of Rollo,—and the fifth, or *Romance of Richard*, son of William Long-sword; both in the same Alexandrine metre.

Wace's sixth work is a poem of considerable length, containing near twelve thousand verses, and gives the remaining *History of the Dukes of Normandy*, which it carries down to the sixth year of Henry I. It mentions the coronation of Henry the Second's eldest son, who was associated to the crown in the year 1170, soon after which the poem may be supposed to have been written. It is in eight-syllable metre, and was mistaken by Mr. Tyrwhitt for the *Roman du Rou*. A copy of it is in the British Museum. Bib. Reg. 4. c. xi.

The seventh work is a *Compendium of the History of the Dukes of Normandy*, beginning with Henry II. and ascending to Rollo. It is in Alexandrine verse, and preserved in the Royal Library at Paris.

The eighth is a *History of the Origin of the Feast of the Conception*, which is supposed to have been established by William the Conqueror, and was kept in Normandy with such magnificence, that it was usually called in France *the Feast of the Normans*. It is to be found in the Royal Library at Paris.

The ninth is a *Life of St. Nicholas*, written, like the preceding, in eight-syllable verse. It is to be found in the library of Trinity College, Cambridge, and in the Bodleian; and a third MS. is in the possession of Mr. Douce, F.A.S. Parts of this poem are extracted by Hickes.—Vide Thesaurus, p. 145. 149, &c.

The tenth is the *Roman du Chevalier au Lion*. Fauchet and others ascribe this to Chrestien de Troyes, who (says M. de la Rue) perhaps converted it into *prose*, as he did the *Romance of Perceval le Galois*. It is to be observed, however, that Fauchet's quotations from the *Romance of the Chevalier au Lion* are in *verse*.—Vide Fauchet, l. ii. c. 10, ad finem.

Lastly, it seems not improbable that Wace may have composed some parts of the *Romance of Alexander*; and Mr. Tyrwhitt suspects that he is the *Robert Guasco* who translated the *Martyrdom of St. George*. The number and excellence of Wace's compositions induced Henry II. to bestow on him a canonry in the Cathedral of Bayeux.

the *History of the Wars of Troy*, a French poem of about twenty thousand verses, imitated from the apocryphal Latin histories of Dares Phrygius and Dictys Cretensis. This work is preserved among the MSS. Harl. No. 4482, and is supposed by M. Galland to have been written very soon after Wace's *Brut d'Angleterre*. It was, perhaps, the success of this poem that induced Henry II. to confide to Benoit the task of writing in French verse the history of the dukes of Normandy : and this royal mandate exciting the emulation of Wace (by whom the circumstance is mentioned), induced that poet to complete his own series of compositions on the same subject, in the hope of proving the inferiority of his rival's talent. Benoit, however, persevered, and accomplished his task to the entire satisfaction of the monarch. This work, containing about twenty-three thousand verses of eight syllables, is preserved in the British Museum, MSS. Harl. No. 1717. Though inferior to Wace in perspicuity and elegance, Benoit is much commended by M. de la Rue for the accuracy of his facts, and for the various and lively pictures of contemporary manners which he has preserved, and which are not to be found in any other author. In descriptive poetry he seems to have possessed considerable merit ; and, supposing him the author of the song on the advantages of the Crusade, which M. de la Rue, with great probability, ascribes to him, he is to be considered as the father of French lyric poetry, so that the high reputation he enjoyed appears to have been well deserved.

GUERNES, an ecclesiastic of Pont St. Maxence, in Picardy, wrote a metrical *Life of Thomas à Becket* ; and, from his anxiety to procure the most authentic information on the subject, came over to Canterbury in 1172. He states that, having begun his work in France, he had been inaccurate in many of his facts, but that, by conversing with persons who had known St. Thomas in private

life, he had been enabled to correct many of his mistakes, and to make a considerable progress in his poem, when his secretary robbed him of his manuscript : that this principally afflicted him from the fear that his name might be employed to cover untruths, and that purchasers might be deluded into buying an imperfect work : but that, far from being discouraged by this unlucky robbery, he had redoubled his zeal for collecting materials, and had finally perfected his work in 1177. He farther assures us, that he had more than once publicly read his poem at the tomb of the Archbishop ; a proof (says M. de la Rue) that the Romance tongue was, at this time, very generally understood in England. Perhaps, however, there never was a period when the town of Canterbury would not have furnished a sufficient audience for such an exhibition. This work of Guernes is written in stanzas of five Alexandrines, all ending with the same rhyme ; a mode of composition which may possibly have been adopted for the purpose of being easily chanted. It is in the British Museum, MSS. Harl. No. 270 ; and M. de la Rue suspects that the stolen copy exists in the MSS. Cotton. Domit. A. xi.

Such is the short and meagre abstract of the information which M. de la Rue has communicated to the public in his two very curious dissertations. He is since returned to France, after pledging himself to resume and continue the subject, and it certainly is to be wished that he may be enabled to accomplish a task for which he is so well qualified. But it is not sufficient that the mines of literature contained in our public libraries should be distinctly pointed out, unless some steps are taken to render them generally useful. All the information that can be obtained from the professed historians of the middle ages has been collected by the successive labour of our antiquaries, whose activity, acuteness, and perseverance, do them the highest honour : and their ingenuity has often been suc-

cessful in detecting and extorting, by comparative criticism, many particulars respecting the state of society, and the progress of arts and manners, the direct communication of which would have been considered by the monkish annalists as degrading to the dignity of their narrative. But these details, which are neglected by the historian, form the principal materials of the poet. His business is minute and particular description; he must seize on every thing that passes before his eyes; and the dress, the customs, the occupations, the amusements, as well as the arts and learning of the day, are necessary, either to the embellishment or the illustration of his subject. An edition of the works of the Norman poets, or at least of a copious and well-selected series of extracts from them, would be a most valuable present to the public; and, indeed, it is only in this shape that they can be very generally useful: because the difficulty of the old manuscript characters is a permanent tax on the ingenuity of each successive student; it is in every case a delay to the gratification of his curiosity; and the talent of decyphering obsolete characters is not necessarily attached to the power of profiting by the information which is concealed under them. Besides, a scarce and valuable manuscript cannot possibly be put into general circulation; and many learned men are necessarily debarred, either by distance, or by infirmity, or by the pressure and variety of their occupations, from spending much time in those public repositories of learning, to which the access has indeed been rendered easy, but could not be made convenient, by the liberality of their founders.



## CHAPTER III.

STATE OF OUR LANGUAGE AND POETRY IN THE REIGN OF HENRY II. AND RICHARD I. EXEMPLIFIED BY AN EXTRACT FROM LAYAMON'S TRANSLATION OF WACE.—CONJECTURES CONCERNING THE PERIOD AT WHICH THE ANGLO-NORMAN OR ENGLISH LANGUAGE BEGAN TO BE FORMED.—EARLY SPECIMEN OF ENGLISH POETRY FROM HICKES'S THESAURUS.

WHILE Norman literature was making a rapid progress in this country under the fostering influence of royal patronage, and the Latin compositions of John of Salisbury, Peter of Blois, Joseph of Exeter, and others, bore testimony to the no less powerful encouragement of the church, the Saxon language, however degraded, still continued to maintain its ground, was generally spoken, and even employed in works of information and amusement, for at least a century after the Norman conquest. This is incontestably proved, not only by part of the Saxon Chronicle, which, as it relates the death of King Stephen, must have been written after that event, but by a much more curious composition, a poetical *translation of Wace's Brut*, written by one LAYAMON, "a priest of Ernleye upon Severn," (as he calls himself,) a copy of which is preserved in the British Museum, MSS. Cot. Calig. A. ix.

As this very curious work never was, and probably never will be, printed, it appeared necessary to depart, in this instance, from the practice usually adopted in the present sketch, and to give the following extract in the spelling of the original MS. This minute accuracy was requisite for the satisfaction of such readers as may choose

to collate the transcript with the original, and for the purpose of enabling every reader to correct such mistakes as may have been committed in the glossarial notes. Perhaps, too, it may not be amiss to exhibit a single specimen of the strange orthography adopted in our early MSS. as a proof that the degree of obscurity attributed to this cause has not been over-rated.

*Tha* <sup>1</sup> *the masse wes isungen* <sup>2</sup>,  
*Of chircchen heo thrungen* <sup>3</sup>.  
 The king mid his folke  
 To his mete *verde* <sup>4</sup>,  
 And *mucle his dugethe* <sup>5</sup> :  
*Drem wes on hirede* <sup>6</sup>,  
*Tha quene, an other halve* <sup>7</sup>,  
*Hire hereberwe isohte* <sup>8</sup> ;  
*Heo* <sup>9</sup> *hafde of wif-monne* <sup>10</sup>  
*Wunder ane monien* <sup>11</sup>.

Tha the king wes iseten  
 Mid his monnen to his mete,

<sup>1</sup> When.

<sup>2</sup> Was sung.

<sup>3</sup> *Out* of church (*kirk*) they thronged.

<sup>4</sup> Went, *fared*.

<sup>5</sup> Many of his nobility, Sax.

<sup>6</sup> Joy was in the household? *drem*, *dream*, jubilatio. *Hired*, Sax. a retinue, household, &c. nearly equivalent to the French word, *mesnie*.

<sup>7</sup> On the other *half*, side.

<sup>8</sup> Her lodging (*harbour*) sought.

<sup>9</sup> *She*, sometimes *they*, sometimes *you*.

<sup>10</sup> Women.

<sup>11</sup> Wonder a many one; i.e. she had wonderfully many women with her.

To *than*<sup>1</sup> kinge com tha biscop,  
*Seind* DUBRIC, *the was swa* god<sup>2</sup>,  
 And *nom*<sup>3</sup> of his *hafde*<sup>4</sup>  
 His *kinc-helm hæhne*<sup>5</sup>,  
 (For than mucle golde  
*The king hine beren n'alde*<sup>6</sup>),  
 And *dude enne lasse crune*  
 On thas kinges *hafde*<sup>7</sup>;  
 And *seoth-then*<sup>8</sup> he gon do  
*Athere quene alswo*<sup>9</sup>.

Inne Troie this *wes lare*<sup>10</sup>  
*Bi heore ælderne dæge*<sup>11</sup>  
*Tha Bruttes of come*<sup>12</sup>.  
 The *weoren wel idone*  
 Alle tha *wepmen*  
 At heore mete seten  
*Sundi bi heom seolven*<sup>13</sup>;

<sup>1</sup> The accusative of *the*, Sax.

<sup>2</sup> Saint Dubric, that was so good.

<sup>3</sup> Took, Shakspeare's *Nim*.

<sup>4</sup> Off his head.

<sup>5</sup> His *high*? *royal*? king-helm, *i. e.* crown.

<sup>6</sup> The king him bear ne would, *i. e.* did not choose to carry so much gold on his head.

<sup>7</sup> And did (*i. e.* placed) a less crown on the king's head.

<sup>8</sup> Sith-then, afterwards.

<sup>9</sup> He did the same to the queen.

<sup>10</sup> Was the *law* or custom.

<sup>11</sup> From their elder days.

<sup>12</sup> When Britons came from thence?

<sup>13</sup> All the women that were *well done* (well educated) at their meat sate *asunder by themselves*.

That heom thuhte *weldon*<sup>1</sup>.  
 And alswa tha wifmen  
 Heore *iwune*<sup>2</sup> hafden.

Tha the king wes isete  
 Mid alle his dugeth to his mete,  
 Eorles and beornes,  
 At borde thas kinges,  
 The stiward com steppen,  
 The KAY wes ihaten,  
*Haxt cniht* on londe,  
 Under than kinge,  
 Of alle than *hæpe*<sup>3</sup>  
 Of Arthures *hirede*.  
 KAY *hehte* him bivoren  
 Moni *hæh mon iboren*<sup>4</sup>.  
 Ther weoren a *thusen cnihte bald*,  
*Wunder wel italde*,  
 That *theineden* than kingen,  
 And *his here thringen*<sup>5</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> That they thought well done.

<sup>2</sup> Habitation. To *won*, Johnson.

<sup>3</sup> Heap, number,—i. e. when the king was seated with all his nobility at his meat, earls and barons at the king's table, the steward came stepping, that Kay was called, the highest knight in the land, under the king, of all the number of Arthur's household.

<sup>4</sup> Kay summoned before him many *high men born*, i. e. high-born men.

<sup>5</sup> There were a thousand bold knights, wonder well numbered, that served the king, and thronged as his servants?

Ælc cnhit hafde *pal on* <sup>1</sup>,  
 And mid golde bigon ;  
 And alle heore *vingeres*  
*Iriven* <sup>2</sup> mid gold ringes,  
 Thas *beorn tha sunde* <sup>3</sup>  
 From *kuchene* <sup>4</sup> to than kinge.

An other half was BEDUER,  
 Thas kinges *hæge birle* <sup>5</sup>.  
 Mid him weoren eorlene sunen,  
 Of *athele* <sup>6</sup> cunne iboren ;  
 And there hehge cnihtene sunen,  
 Tha thider weoren *icunen* <sup>7</sup> ;  
 Seoven kingene sunen,  
 That mid him *quehten* <sup>8</sup>.  
 BEDUER *avormest eode* <sup>9</sup>,  
 Mid guldene bolle :  
 After him a thusend  
*Thrasten* <sup>10</sup> to hirede ;

<sup>1</sup> Each knight had a *pall* on, (i. e. mantle,) and bordered with gold.

<sup>2</sup> Their fingers *fastened* with gold rings.

<sup>3</sup> That bore sundry things ? or, what was sent ?

<sup>4</sup> Kitchen. The word seems to have been pronounced *cookeene*.

<sup>5</sup> On another part was Bedwer, the king's *high-butler* (*birlian*, *haurire*, Sax.)

<sup>6</sup> Of noble kin born.

<sup>7</sup> Probably for *icumen*—"that thither were come."

<sup>8</sup> Marched, *cweten*, Sax.

<sup>9</sup> Aforemost yode, went first, with a gold bowl.

<sup>10</sup> Thrust, or pressed forward, to serve.

And *alle thas cunnes*<sup>1</sup> drenche,  
 Theme cuthe on bithenche.  
 And tha quene, an hire ende,  
 Wifmen *swide hende*<sup>2</sup> ;  
 A thusend hire eode bivoren,  
 Riche men and wel *icoren*,  
 To *thainen* there quene  
 And than that mid hire weoren.

*Nes he nævere iboren*<sup>3</sup>,  
 Of nane cnihte *icoren*,  
 Ilæred, no læwed,  
 Anauere n'are leode,  
 The cuthe him itelle  
*An anies cunnes spelle*  
 Of halve than richedome  
 The wes inne KAIRLIUNE ;  
 Of seolvere and of golde,  
 And gode *iweden*<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> All *kinds* of drink that they could think of? or, they *can* drink all that they could think of?

<sup>2</sup> Very beautiful, handsome; the construction seems to be—  
 “And the queen on her part [was with] very beautiful women. A thousand men, rich and well chosen, (*coren*, Sax.) went before, to serve the queen, and those that were with her.”

<sup>3</sup> “Ne was he never born of none chosen knight, learned nor lewd (ignorant), nor any where was there a people that could tell, in any kind of spell (language), of half the rich-dom (riches) that was in Caerlion.” The second verse seems to have been introduced solely for the sake of the rhyme.

<sup>4</sup> Good weeds, *i. e.* rich dresses.

Of hehge *iborene* monnen  
 Tha inne *hirede wuneden* <sup>1</sup>,  
 Of horsen, and of *hafueken* <sup>2</sup>,  
 Of *hunden to deoren*,  
 And of *riche iweden*,  
 Tha a than *hirede weoren*.

*And of alle than folke* <sup>3</sup>  
 The wuneden ther on *folde*  
 Wes thisses londes folk  
*Leodene hendest itald*.  
 And als wa tha wimmen,  
*Wunliche* on heowen,  
 And *hahlukest iscrudde*,  
 And alre bezst *itogene*.

For heo *hafdenon iquethen alle* <sup>4</sup>  
 By heore quike live

<sup>1</sup> "Of high-born men that dwelt in the king's household." The word *hirede*, Sax. has three interpretations; a household—service—and a palace.

<sup>2</sup> "Hawks, Sax. The next article is deer hounds.

<sup>3</sup> "And of all the folk that dwelt on fold (*i. e.* on earth) was this land's folk the handsomest (or noble) people *told*. And also the women handsome (*winsome, vanlich*) of hue, and highest shrouded (most richly dressed) and best instructed, (*itogene, peritus*, Sax.) *taughten*, Lat. *docens*.

<sup>4</sup> "For they had declared (*iquethen*, Sax.) all, by their lives (*quike leve*, living lives), that they would of one hue their [*intire*] dress have. Some had white, some had red, some had good green also, and each kind of variable cloth (*fah-clath*, Sax.). They were wonderfully uniform (*anelich*, Sax.)." It seems, from this passage,

That heo wolden of ane heowen  
 Heore clathes habben.  
 Sum hafde whit, sum hafden ræd,  
 Sum hafde god grene æc,  
 And alches cunnes *fah-clath* ;  
 Heom wes wunder *anelath* ;  
*And elche untuhle*  
*Heo talden unwurthe* <sup>1</sup>.  
 Tha hafde *ænglene ard* <sup>2</sup>  
 That *alre bezste* here word,  
 And this *leodisce volc* æc,  
*Leofvest* than kinge.  
 Tha wifmen *hehge iborene* <sup>3</sup>  
 Tha wuneden a thissen londe  
 Hafden *iquethen* alle  
 On heore *guides* sothe

that Layamon thought it indecent to wear the different parts of dress of different colours. Wace, indeed, seems to express the same opinion.

<sup>1</sup> The word *untuhle* in this passage, and *tuhle*, which occurs hereafter, may possibly be derived from *tucht*, *tught*, or *tuckt*, which, in several Gothic dialects, signifies *discipline*, *education*, and sometimes *chastity*, &c. See Ihres's Gloss. in voce *Tucht*. The passage seems to mean, that the women were severe in their manners, and "told (i. e. held) as unworthy those who were irregular in their conduct or dress."

<sup>2</sup> If this mean *English earth*, it is certainly a violent anachronism; and yet it seems to mean, "Then had the English earth all that was best worth, and the very commonest people (*leodisce volc*) also thought themselves of more value than kings."

<sup>3</sup> "The women high-born, that dwelt in this land, had declared all, on their word's truth, that [any] man for their lord take they ne would among this people, never none knight (ne were he nought so well idight), unless (*but*) he proved (*scostned*) were thrice in camp."



That man *lauerd* taken nolde  
 Inne thissere leode  
 Næver næenne chnit,  
 (Neore he noht swa wel idiht)  
 Bute he *icostned* weoren  
 Thrie inne compe,  
 And his *oht scipen icudde* <sup>1</sup>,  
 And *ifonded* <sup>2</sup> hine seolve.  
 Baldeliche he mitte thenne *gu*,  
 Nen him *brude* <sup>3</sup>.  
 For there ilke *tuhle*  
 Cnihtes weoren *ohte* <sup>4</sup> ;  
 Tha wifmen wel idone,  
 And tha betere *biwitene* <sup>5</sup>.  
 Tha weoren *Brutene*  
*Blissen inoge* <sup>6</sup>.

Tha the king *iȝeten* <sup>7</sup> hafde  
 And al his *mon-weorede* <sup>8</sup>,  
 Tha *bugen* <sup>9</sup> ut of burhȝe  
 Theines swithen balde.

<sup>1</sup> And his fear escape could.                      <sup>2</sup> And he tried himself.

<sup>3</sup> Boldly he might then go, none him *upbraided*?

<sup>4</sup> For there all the knights were disciplined by the fear of disgrace? (*ohte*, Sax. timor.)

<sup>5</sup> The women acted well, and were more prudent.

<sup>6</sup> Then were the Britons blessed enough?

<sup>7</sup> Eaten.

<sup>8</sup> Multitude of attendants, Sax.

<sup>9</sup> Fled.—Then fled out of the town the people very quickly.

Alle tha kinges,  
 And heore *here-thringes* <sup>1</sup>.  
 Alle tha biscopes,  
 And alle tha clarkes,  
 Alle tha eorles,  
 And alle tha beornes,  
 Alle tha theines,  
 Alle tha sweines,  
*Feire iscrudde* <sup>2</sup>  
*Helde geond felde* <sup>3</sup>.  
 Summe heo gunnen <sup>4</sup> ærnen <sup>5</sup>,  
 Summe heo gunnen urnen <sup>6</sup>,  
 Summe heo gunnen lepen,  
 Summe heo gunnen *sceoten* <sup>7</sup>,  
 Summe heo wræstleden  
 And *wither-gome makeden* <sup>8</sup>,  
 Summe heo on *velde*  
*Pleouweden under scelde* <sup>9</sup>,  
 Summe heo driven balles  
 Widegeond tha feldes.

<sup>1</sup> Their throngs of servants.

<sup>2</sup> Fairly dressed.

<sup>3</sup> Held [their way] over the fields; or, perhaps, *covered* the fields  
*(helan, Sax.) geond is beyond.*

<sup>4</sup> Began.

<sup>5</sup> To discharge arrows.

<sup>6</sup> To run.

<sup>7</sup> To shoot or throw darts.

<sup>8</sup> Made, or played at, *wither-games*, Sax. (games of emulation),  
*i. e. justed.*

<sup>9</sup> Some they on field played under shield; *i. e.* fought with  
 swords.

Monianes kunnes *gomen*  
 Ther heo gunnen *drinen*<sup>1</sup>.  
 And wha swa mihte iwenne  
 Wurthsceipe of his *gomene*<sup>2</sup>,  
*Hine me*<sup>3</sup> ladde mid songe  
 Atforen than leod kinge ;  
 And the king, for his *gomene*,  
 ȝæf him *ȝeven*<sup>4</sup> gode.  
 Alle tha *quene*<sup>5</sup>  
 The icumen weoren there,  
 And alle tha lafdies,  
 Leoneden *ȝeond* walles,  
 To bihalden tha *duȝe* then,  
 And that folc plæie.  
 This *ilæste threo dæȝes*<sup>6</sup>,  
*Swulc gomes and swulc plæȝes*,  
 Tha a than *veorthe dæie*  
 The king gon to *spekene*<sup>7</sup>

<sup>1</sup> "Many a kind of game there they can urge." *Dringen* (Dutch), is to urge, press, or drive.

<sup>2</sup> And whoso might win worship by his gaming.

<sup>3</sup> "Him they led with song before the people's king." *Me*, a word synonymous with the French *on*, introduced, perhaps, by the Danes or Normans.

<sup>4</sup> Gave him givings, gifts.

<sup>5</sup> "All the queens who were come to the festival, and all the ladies, leaned over the walls to behold the nobles there, and that folk play."

<sup>6</sup> This lasted three days, such games and such plays.

<sup>7</sup> Then, on the fourth day, the king went to *council*.

And aȝæf his gode cnihten  
Al heorere rihten<sup>1</sup>;  
He ȝef seolver, he ȝæf gold,  
He ȝef hors, he ȝef lond,  
Castles, and clathes eke;  
His monnen he *iquende*<sup>2</sup>.

The reader is certainly aware that a large proportion of the French words which have found their way into our language were introduced through the medium of translations from Norman literature; and it is evident that such terms are particularly to be expected in descriptions of dress, of feasts, and of amusements; it is therefore presumed that the foregoing extract, both on account of its subject and its length, may be received as a tolerably fair specimen of Layamon's phraseology. And as it does not contain any word which we are under the necessity of referring to a French origin, we cannot but consider it as simple and unmixed, though very barbarous Saxon. At the same time, the orthography of this MS., in which we see, for the first time, the admission of the soft *g* together with the Saxon *ȝ*, as well as some other peculiarities, seems to prove that the pronunciation of our language had already undergone a considerable change. Indeed, the whole style of this composition, which is broken into a series of short, unconnected sentences, and in which the construction is as plain and artless as possible, and perfectly free from inversions, appears to indicate that little more than the substitution of a few French for the present Saxon words was now necessary to produce an exact resemblance with that Anglo-Norman, or English, of which we possess a few

<sup>1</sup> And gave his good knights all their rights or rewards.

<sup>2</sup> He satisfied.

specimens supposed to have been written in the early part of the thirteenth century.

Layamon's versification also is no less remarkable than his language. Sometimes he seems anxious to imitate the rhymes, and to adopt the regular number of syllables which he had observed in his original ; at other times he disregards both ; either because he did not consider the laws of metre, or the consonance of final sounds, as essential to the gratification of his readers, or because he was unable to adopt them throughout so long a work, from the want of models in his native language on which to form his style. The latter is, perhaps, the most probable supposition ; but, at all events, it is apparent that the recurrence of his rhymes is much too frequent to be the result of chance ; so that, upon the whole, it seems reasonable to infer that Layamon's work was composed at or very near the period when the Saxons and Normans in this country began to unite into one nation, and to adopt a common language. As this is a most curious epocha in our literary as well as political history, it is worth while to inquire how far it is capable of being ascertained, if not with precision, at least within some definite limits.

Geoffrey of Monmouth's history was written in or about 1138 ; and we know from Wace's concluding words that his translation was not finished till 1155. This appears, at first sight, to be rather a long interval ; because a work containing the whole early history of Britain, supposed to be compiled from authentic materials, written in Latin, and consequently addressed to all the learned men of the age, could not fail to excite very general curiosity. But before the invention of printing, when books could only be multiplied by transcription, it must be expected that a considerable time would elapse before a long work would become so popular as to require a translation, or fall in the way of those who had leisure and ability for

such a task. If we assume a period of about twenty-five years for the completion of Layamon's version, we shall fix it at 1180; and this is, perhaps, the earliest date that can be assigned to it, because Wace's Brut was longer than Geoffrey's history, and was likely to be less rapidly diffused among the learned; besides which, being written in rhyme, its imitation was accompanied with greater difficulty.

It is apparently impossible to establish, with any degree of certainty, a chronological series of those English poems which we still possess in manuscript, or to determine the year in which that series ought to commence; but if any conclusion can be drawn from internal evidence, arising from a comparison of the many pieces ascribed to the middle of the thirteenth century, it may be presumed, from the facility of rhyming evinced in many of them, and even in the very dull history of Robert of Gloucester, which contains more than thirteen thousand rhymes, that much poetry had been written before this period, and some probably as early as the accession of Henry III. in 1216. Perhaps, therefore, we may fairly infer, that the Saxon language and literature began to be mixed with the Norman about 1180; and that in 1216 the change may be considered as complete.

If, instead of assuming these data for our conjecture, we should choose to establish it on such documents as can be easily drawn from our political history, we shall arrive at nearly the same conclusion. This will appear from the following considerations.

It must be remembered that, for many years after the Conquest, the English could not be brought to a quiet acquiescence in William's usurpation; that the number of his troops bore a very small proportion to the whole population of the island; and consequently that they could not have been safely scattered over the country, but were, of necessity, collected into garrisons, so as to

form at all times the elements of an army, which it was the object of the feudal system to connect and perpetuate. There were therefore two classes of persons, whose respective languages could not be immediately affected by the Conquest; these were the Norman nobles and the Saxon peasants. The first,—immured in fortified castles with their families; anxiously preserving their original connexion with France, where many of them possessed estates; associating only with their own countrymen at the state festivals, when they repaired to the court of their sovereign; and too haughty to converse with their vassals,—retained the exclusive use of the French language to a much later period than that with which we are at present occupied. The second, or *uplandish* men, as they are frequently called, (the cities being usually situated in plains,) having little intercourse with their foreign masters, continued for ages to preserve the Saxon speech with very little adulteration, and in many provinces retain it to the present day.

It is therefore in the towns only that we can expect to find a mixture of speech, resulting from a mixture of inhabitants; and to their history must we look for the evidence of its operation. But in the first instance, the Norman garrisons, and such colonies of their countrymen as may have been settled under their protection, were effectually separated from the native inhabitants, by contempt on one side, by fear on the other, and on both by opposition of interests. The two nations formed separate and hostile societies: they were in a state of *juxta-position*, but without intercourse. Even their commercial relations were very trifling, the internal as well as external trade of the country being principally carried on by Jews.

This mutual hatred was encouraged by the partialities, and still more by the policy, of William and his immediate successors. All the towns in the kingdom were attached

as demesnes either to the crown or to its tenants in capite; their inhabitants were subjected to all the feudal services, and, being arbitrarily governed by a regal or baronial officer, were exposed to every exaction of partial and capricious tyranny. Anderson, in his History of Commerce, gives us a curious instance of the general poverty resulting from this system. "We find in the first volume of Rymer's *Fœdera*," (p. 80,) says he, "a letter from that king, dated [1193] at Haguenau in Germany, where the Imperial Diet was then assembled, to his mother queen Elinor, and to the judges of England, earnestly pressing them to raise the money for his ransom to the said sordid Emperor, being seventy thousand marks of silver, and urging that for this end all the money of the churches may be borrowed, as also of the barons. HERE IS NOT THE LEAST MENTION OF THE MONEY OF MERCHANTS OR CITIZENS, which shews the poor state of England at this time, in point of commerce or wealth." He had, however, previously noticed a most material and beneficial change which took place a few years before in the political situation of the citizens and burghers; a change, indeed, so important, that Madox, in his History of the Exchequer, (chap. x.) considers it as the adoption of an entirely new system, and as the foundation of all their future prosperity. This was the grant of various immunities by charter, and the formation of corporate bodies in certain towns and cities; the earliest of which is assigned to the 26th year of Henry II., 1180, when such charters were granted to the city of London, and the town of Southampton.

The object of Henry's policy in this measure was, by encouraging the growth of the towns, to erect a barrier against the encroachments of the aristocracy; and this policy, in which he persevered during the remainder of his reign, was also adopted by his sons. Several proofs of it are recorded by Anderson, even in the short and



busy reign of Richard I., and they are much more numerous in that of his successor. "Notwithstanding all the faults too justly (it is to be feared) charged on king John," says this historian, "we find him, in this very first year of his reign (1199,) beginning the good purpose as a king,—which he farther increased in the course of his reign :—this was the erecting of his demesne towns into *free burghs*; which thereby paved the way for the gradual introduction of commerce into his kingdom." The barons, on the other hand, with no less policy, declared themselves the champions of all the privileges obtained or claimed by the cities, who thus derived a double advantage from the contest for popularity between the king and the aristocracy.

It is not our present business to pursue the gradual effects of these measures in disseminating liberty and prosperity, but it seems probable that their operation on our language must have been immediate and extensive. The Norman and Saxon inhabitants of England were now permanently united by the bonds of common interest; and the establishment of a popular form of municipal government, under an annually elective magistracy, by encouraging the spirit and furnishing the topics of daily discussion, could not fail of giving currency to new forms of speech, and of forming a language adapted to their new situation.

It is evident that nothing less than the most minute inquiry into all the circumstances of our history under the first Norman kings would be sufficient for the full investigation of this subject; but the preceding observations will perhaps authorize us to assume, that the formation of the English language took its rise, and was probably far advanced, during the interval of not quite forty years which preceded the accession of Henry III.

After quitting Layamon, we shall waste little time on the compositions of his immediate successors. The

earliest of these, according to Mr. Tyrwhitt, is a paraphrase of the gospel histories called *Ormulum*, composed by one ORME or ORMIN, which seems to have been considered as mere prose by Hickes and Wanley, who have given extracts from it, but is really written in verse of fifteen syllables, without rhyme, in imitation of the most common form of the Latin tetrameter iambic. The next is a *Moral Poem on Old Age*, written in rhyme, and extracted by Hickes, part of which is to be found in the introduction to Dr. Johnson's Dictionary. Another poem, also transcribed from Hickes's extract, by Dr. Johnson, is a *Life of St. Margaret*, which, as Mr. Warton tells us, forms part of a voluminous MS. in the Bodleian library, containing various lives of the saints, translated, perhaps, from some earlier Latin or French original.

But the most entertaining and curious specimen preserved in Hickes's Thesaurus is one which that learned editor has characterized as *a most malevolent satire* on the religious orders. It, however, by no means deserves this disgraceful appellation, because it does not contain one of those opprobrious expressions which are so liberally employed, as a substitute for wit, by the early satirists. The author, whoever he was, takes advantage of a popular tradition respecting the existence of an imaginary terrestrial paradise, in some unknown quarter of the globe, which he calls the land of *Cokaygne*; in which his houris are nuns, and their happy companions white and grey monks; and his object is to insinuate that the ease and luxury enjoyed in the monasteries had scarcely less effect in peopling the monastic orders, than the inducements more usually assigned by the proselytes of zeal and devotion. In the Harleian MSS. there is an ancient French poem, quoted by Mr. Warton, on a nearly similar plan, called *Le Ordre de bel Eyse*. The same idea is also pursued by Rabelais, and seems to have been a great favourite with the early French satirists. The word

*Cokaygne* seems to be Frenchified Latin ; and our poem bears the strongest mark of being a translation ; because the elegance of the sketch, and the refined irony of the general composition, are strongly contrasted with the rudeness of the language. As the poem is not excessively long, it is here printed entire, with such notes as appeared necessary to render it tolerably intelligible. There are, however, some passages, corrupted, perhaps, by the negligence of transcribers, the obscurity of which I have not been able to remove.

Far in sea, by West Spain,  
Is a land *ihote*<sup>1</sup> *Cokaygne* <sup>2</sup>,  
There n'is land under *heaven-rich* <sup>3</sup>  
Of *wel*<sup>4</sup> of goodness it y-like.  
Though Paradise be merry and bright,  
*Cokaygne* is of fairer sight.  
What is there in Paradise  
But grass, and flower, and *green-rise* <sup>5</sup> ?  
Though there be joy and great *dute* <sup>6</sup>  
There n'is meat but fruit.

<sup>1</sup> Called. (Saxon.)

<sup>2</sup> From *coquina* ; whence *cucina*, *cuisine*, &c., and the old English work *cockney*. In P. Plowman's Vision, fol. xxv. ed. i. 1550 (quoted hereafter), P. P. says,

————— I have no salt bacon.

Ne no *cokeneg*, by Christ ! *collops* for to make.

Perhaps the intelligence which the inhabitants of the metropolis displayed in the culinary art may have procured them the appellation of *cockneys* from *uplandish* or *country-men*.

<sup>3</sup> Heaven, the kingdom of heaven. Sax.

<sup>4</sup> Wealth, abundance of goodness. Sax.

<sup>5</sup> Branches. Sax.

<sup>6</sup> Pleasure, *deduit*. Old Fr.

There n'is hall, *bure*<sup>1</sup> *no*<sup>2</sup> bench ;  
 But water, man-is thirst to quench.  
*Beth*<sup>3</sup> there no men but two,  
*Hely*<sup>4</sup> and Enoch also.  
*Clinglich*<sup>5</sup> may *hi*<sup>6</sup> go  
 Where there *womith*<sup>7</sup> men no *mo*<sup>8</sup>.  
 In Cokaygne is meat and drink,  
 Without care, *how*<sup>9</sup> and *swink*<sup>10</sup>  
 The meat is *trie*<sup>11</sup>, the drink so clear,  
 To noon, *russin*<sup>12</sup>, and suppere ;  
 I *sigge*<sup>13</sup> (*for sooth boot were*<sup>14</sup>)  
 There n'is land on earth *is*<sup>15</sup> peer.

<sup>1</sup> Bower, (Sax.) synonymous with chamber. F.

<sup>2</sup> No, and sometimes *neither*, are used for *nor*.

<sup>3</sup> There are.

<sup>4</sup> Elias.

<sup>5</sup> The sense seems to be, "It is easy for them to be *clean* and of pure heart, because they are only two, and cannot be corrupted by bad example."—Why Paradise should contain only two inhabitants is not very intelligible, but it was thus represented in the pageants, as appears from a passage in Fabian, quoted by Strutt (View of Manners, &c. vol. ii. p. 53): "In the border of this delicious place, *which was named Paradise*, stood *two* forgrowen fathars, resembling *Enocke* and *Hely*, the which had this saying to the king," &c. Reign of Henry VI. vol. ii. p. 425. ed. 1559.

<sup>6</sup> They. The words *they* and *them*, instead of *hi* and *hem*, seem to have been introduced, as Mr. Tyrwhitt observes, about the time of Chaucer.

<sup>7</sup> Dwell.

<sup>8</sup> More.

<sup>9</sup> Anxiety. Sax.

<sup>10</sup> Labour. Sax.

<sup>11</sup> Choice, *trie*. Fr.

<sup>12</sup> *Rushing* is still used in the northern counties for what the French call a *gouter*, or meal between dinner and supper. Vide Grose's Prov. Glossary. Noon was the usual time of dinner.

<sup>13</sup> I say, or affirm.

<sup>14</sup> This kind of phrase is now obsolete ; and yet we might say, "for falsehood boot-less were."

<sup>15</sup> Apparently for *his*, instead of *its*.

Under heaven n'is land I *wiss* <sup>1</sup>  
 Of so *mochil* <sup>2</sup> joy and bliss.

There is many swete sight :  
 All is day, n'is there no night ;  
 There n'is *baret* <sup>3</sup> nother strife,  
 N'is there no death, *ac* <sup>4</sup> ever life.  
 There n'is lack of meat, *no* cloth ;  
 There n'is man *no* woman wroth ;  
 There n'is serpent, wolf, *no* fox,  
 Horse *no capil* <sup>5</sup>, cow *no* ox ;  
 There n'is sheep, *no* swine, *no* goat ;  
*No* none *horwyla* <sup>6</sup>, God it wot,  
 Nother *harate* <sup>7</sup>, nother stud :  
 The land is full of other good.  
 N'is there fly, flea, *no* louse,  
 In cloth, in town, bed, *no* house.  
 There n'is *dunnir* <sup>8</sup>, sleet, *no* hail ;  
*No* none vile worm, *no* snail :  
*No* none storm, rain, *no* wind :  
 There n'is man *no* woman blind :  
*Ok* <sup>9</sup> all is game, joy, and glee.  
 Well is him that there may be !

<sup>1</sup> I know.

<sup>2</sup> *Muckle*, much.

<sup>3</sup> Wrangling.

<sup>4</sup> But.

<sup>5</sup> Steed, from *caballus*. It is used by Chaucer, &c.

<sup>6</sup> Probably a *groom*, as *harate* and *stud* are mentioned immediately afterwards : the Saxon word is *hors-wealh*.

<sup>7</sup> *Huras*. Fr. A place where horses are bred.

<sup>8</sup> Thunder. Sax.

<sup>9</sup> But.

There beth rivers, great and fine,  
 Of oil, milk, honey, and wine.  
 Water serveth there to no thing  
 But to *siyt*<sup>1</sup> and to washing.  
 There is<sup>2</sup> manner fruit :  
 All is solace and *dedute*.

There is a well-fair Abbèy  
 Of white monkes, and of grey ;  
 There beth bowers, and halls ;  
 All of pasties beth the walls,  
 Of flesh, of fish, and a rich meat,  
 The likefullest that man may eat.  
 Flouren-cakes beth the *shingles*<sup>3</sup> all  
 Of church, cloister, bowers, and hall.  
 The *pinnes*<sup>4</sup> beth fat puddings,  
 Rich meat to princes and kings.  
 Man may there of *eat* enoy,  
 All with *riyt*<sup>5</sup>, and nought with *woy*<sup>6</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> To seeth, or boil.

<sup>2</sup> Here the word *many* is, perhaps, omitted.

<sup>3</sup> Wooden tiles, for which those of clay were afterwards substituted. Those ships in which the edges of the planks cover each other like tiles, and which we now, with less apparent reason, call *clinker-built* vessels, were formerly called *shingled ships*. "That in thy *shingled* ship shall be saved." P. Plowman, fol. xlv.

<sup>4</sup> Pinnacles. Mr. Gray, in one of his letters to Mr. Mason, seems to say that these ornaments were not introduced into our Gothic architecture before the reign of Henry III. (Vide quarto edit. p. 296.)

<sup>5-6</sup> The meaning seems to be, that meat was not *weighed* out, but in *abundance*, and at the disposal of all who chose to seize it. *Eat*, meat. Sax. *ette*, cibus.

All is common to young and old,  
To stout and stern, meek and bold.

There is a cloister fair and light,  
Broad and long of seemly sight.  
The pillars of that cloister all  
Beth y-turned of chrystàl,  
With *harlas* <sup>1</sup> and capital  
Of green jaspè and red coràl.  
In the *praer* <sup>2</sup> is a tree,  
*Swithe* <sup>3</sup> likeful for to see.  
The root is ginger and *galingale* <sup>4</sup>,  
The scions beth all *sedwale* <sup>5</sup>.  
*Trie* <sup>6</sup> maces beth the flower,  
The rind *canel* <sup>7</sup> of sweet odoùr ;  
The fruit *gilofre* <sup>8</sup> of good smack.  
Of *cucubes* <sup>9</sup> there n'is no lack,  
There beth roses of red *blee* <sup>10</sup>,

<sup>1</sup> Probably the *plindh*, in Italian *orlo*. In Cotgrave's Dict. we have *orle*, for a hem or border ; hence the word *ourler*.

<sup>2</sup> Meadow, *prairie*. Fr.

<sup>3</sup> Very.

<sup>4</sup> The sweet cyperus, a sort of rush, the roots of which were supposed to be an excellent stomachic. It was probably, like the real galanga, one of the ingredients in the hypocras, or medicated wine, used at the conclusion of their meals.

<sup>5</sup> Valerian ; or perhaps the mountain spikenard ; for Parkinson calls them both by the name of *setwall*.

<sup>6</sup> Choice. Fr.

<sup>7</sup> Cinnamon. Fr.

<sup>8</sup> Cloves. Fr. They were first introduced into the West in 1190. Anderson's Hist. of Commerce.

<sup>9</sup> Probably cuckoo-flowers, or lady-smocks.

<sup>10</sup> Colour.

And lily, likeful for to see :  
 They *falloweth*<sup>1</sup> never day *no* night ;  
 This ought to be a sweet sight.  
 There beth four *wells*<sup>2</sup> in the abbey  
 Of *treacle*<sup>3</sup> and *halwei*<sup>4</sup>,  
 Of *baum*<sup>5</sup>, and eke *pimènt*<sup>6</sup>,  
 Ever *ernend*<sup>7</sup> to right *rent*<sup>8</sup> ;  
 Of they streames all the mould,  
 Stones precious, and gold.  
 There is sapphire, and *uniune*<sup>9</sup>,  
 Carbuncle, and *astiune*<sup>10</sup>,  
*Smaragde*<sup>11</sup>, *lugre*<sup>12</sup>, and *prassiune*<sup>13</sup>,  
 Beryl, onyx, toposiune,  
 Amethyst, and chrysolite,  
 Chalcedon, and *epetite*<sup>14</sup>.

There beth birdes, many and *fale*<sup>15</sup>,  
 Throstle, thrush, and nightingale,

<sup>1</sup> They *fade* ; grow yellow. Our word *fallow* had originally the same meaning.

<sup>2</sup> Springs.

<sup>3</sup> Any sovereign remedy was at this time called *treacle* : *Venice treacle* is still in some repute. The sirop of the sugar-bakers, now called *treacle*, cannot have been known so early.

<sup>4</sup> Holy water ?

<sup>5</sup> Balsam. Fr.

<sup>6</sup> Spiced-wine. Fr.

<sup>7</sup> Running. Sax.

<sup>8</sup> In a full stream.

<sup>9-14</sup> Of these names three only are intelligible ; the *unio*, or pearl ; the *smaragde*, or emerald ; and the *prassiune* (*prasius*), a stone generally found in the emerald mines. *Astiune* may, perhaps, be the *astrios*, or *astroites*, of Pliny ; *lugre*, the leuco-chrysus, or chrysolite ; and *epetite*, the hæmatites, or blood-stone. The virtues formerly assigned to gems will account for the length of this list.

<sup>15</sup> Numerous. Sax.



*Chalandre*<sup>1</sup>, and *wood-wale*<sup>2</sup>,  
 And other birdes without tale,  
 That stinteth never by *har* might  
 Merry to sing day and night.

[*Here a few lines are lost.*]

Yet I do you mo to wit,  
 The geese y-roasted on the spit  
 Flee to that abbey, God it wot,  
 And *gredith*<sup>3</sup>, "Geese all hot! all hot!"  
*Hi* bringeth *galek*<sup>4</sup>, great plentè,  
 The best *y-dight*<sup>5</sup> that man may see.  
 The *leverokes*<sup>6</sup> that beth *couth*<sup>7</sup>,  
 Lieth adown to man-is mouth,  
*Y-dight* in stew full *swithe*<sup>8</sup> well,  
 Powder'd with *gingelofre* and *canèl*<sup>9</sup>.

N'is no speech of no drink;  
 All take enough without *swink*<sup>10</sup>.  
 When the monkes *geeth*<sup>11</sup> to mass,  
 All the *fenestres*<sup>12</sup>, that beth of glass,  
 Turneth into chrystal bright,  
 To give monkes more light.  
 When the masses beth *isend*<sup>13</sup>,

<sup>1</sup> Gold-finch.

<sup>3</sup> Cry. Sax.

<sup>5</sup> Dressed.

<sup>7</sup> Taught.

<sup>9</sup> Ginger and cinnamon.

<sup>11</sup> Go.

<sup>13</sup> Ended.

<sup>2</sup> Wood-lark.

<sup>4</sup> Singing-birds?

<sup>6</sup> Larks.

<sup>8</sup> Quickly.

<sup>10</sup> Labour.

<sup>12</sup> Windows.

And the bookes *up-ilend* <sup>1</sup>,  
 The chrystal turneth into glass  
 In state that it rather was.

The young monkes each day  
 After meat goeth to play ;  
 N'is there hawk *no* fowl so swift  
 Better fleeing by the lift  
 Than the monkes, high of mood,  
 With *har* sleeves and *har* hood.  
 When the abbot seeth *ham* flee,  
 That he holds for much glee.  
*Ac* natheless, all there among,  
 He biddeth *ham* 'light to eve song.  
 The monkes 'lighteth nought adown,  
*Ac* far fleeth *into randùn* <sup>2</sup> ;  
 When the abbot *him* y-seeth  
 That his monkes from him fleeth,  
 He taketh maiden of the route,  
 And turneth up her white *toute* <sup>3</sup> ;  
 And beateth the tabor with his hand,  
 To make his monkes 'light to land.  
 When his monkes that y-seeth,  
 To the maid down *hi* fleeth,

<sup>1</sup> Laid up.

<sup>2</sup> At random.

<sup>3</sup> There is much pleasantry in this picture of the young monks taking wing, by means of their sleeves and hoods, and flying like so many Cupids ; and our ancestors were probably not offended by the direct mention of the drum by which the reverend abbot called them back to their devotions.

And goeth the wench all aboute,  
 And thwacketh all her white *toute* :  
 And sith, after *her* swink,  
 Wendeth meekly home to drink ;  
 And goeth to *har* collation,  
 A well-fair procession.

Another abbey is thereby,  
 Forsooth a great fair nunnery :  
 Up a river of sweet milk,  
 Where is plenty great of silk.  
 When the summer's day is hot,  
 The young nunnes taketh a boat,  
 And doth *ham* forth in that rivere,  
 Both with oares and with steer.  
 When *hi* beth far from the abbèy,  
*Hi* maketh *ham* naked for to play,  
 And lieth down into the brim,  
 And doth *ham* slily for to swim.  
 The young monkes that *hi*<sup>1</sup> seeth,  
*Hi* doth *ham* up, and forth *hi* fleeth,  
 And cometh to the nunnes anon.  
 And each monke him taketh one,  
 And *snellich*<sup>2</sup> beareth forth *har* prey  
 To the *mochil* grey abbèy.  
 And teacheth the nunnes an orison  
 With *jambleuc*<sup>3</sup> up and down.

<sup>1</sup> Them.<sup>2</sup> Swiftly.<sup>3</sup> Gambols.

The monke that wol be *staluu* <sup>1</sup> good,  
 And can set aright his hood,  
 He shall have, without dangere,  
 Twelve wives each year :  
 All through right, and nought through grace,  
 For to do himself solace.  
 And thilk monke that *clepith* <sup>2</sup> best,  
 And doth his *likam* <sup>3</sup> all to rest,  
 Of him is hope, God it wot,  
 To be soon father abbòt.

Whoso will come that land to,  
 Full great penance he mot do.  
 Seven years in swine's *dritte* <sup>4</sup>  
 He mot wade, *wol ye y-witte* <sup>5</sup>,  
 All anon up to the chin,  
 So he shall the land win.

Lordings, good and *hend* <sup>6</sup>,  
 Mot ye never off world wend,  
 'Fore ye stand to your chance,  
 And fulfill that penance ;  
 That ye mot that land y-see,  
 And never more turn *ayè* <sup>7</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> Stout.

<sup>2</sup> Is declared ; or, perhaps, *clippeth*, i. e. embraceth.

<sup>3</sup> He who forces all his *likes*, or fellows, to take rest.

<sup>4</sup> Dirt.

<sup>5</sup> You must know.

<sup>6</sup> Civil.

<sup>7</sup> Again.

Pray we God so mot it be !  
Amen, per saint charitè.

A great many of our poets in the sixteenth century allude to this story of *Cokaygne*, but they change its name without much improving it : they call it *Lubber-land*. In France and Italy the original expression is become proverbial. In the second volume of Mr. Way's translations from Le Grand's abridgment of the ancient French *Fabliaux* is a poem on the *Pays de Cocagne* ; but not at all resembling the work which we have been examining. This was, perhaps, imported by the Crusaders, and bears some resemblance to the story told by Sir J. Maundevile, of the Chief of the Assassins, or *Old Man of the Mountain*, as he is usually called. " Men clept him," says our traveller, "*Gatholonabes* ; and he was full of cauteles and of subtle deceits : and he had a full fair castle, and a strong, in a mountain—And he had let muren all the mountain about with a strong wall and a fair. And within—the fairest garden that any man might behold ; and therein were trees bearing all manner of fruits—and—all manner virtuous herbs of good smell, and all other herbs also that bearen fair flowers. And he had also—many fair wells. And, beside tho wells, he had let make fair halls and fair chambers, depainted all with gold and azure. And there weren in that place many a diverse things, and many diverse stories : and of beasts, and of birds, that sunge full delectably, and moveden by craft, that it seemed that they weren quick. And he had also in his garden all manner of fowls and of beasts, that any man might think on, for to have play or disport to behold them. And—the fairest damsels that might been found under the age of 15 year ; and the fairest young stripplings—of that same age.—And he had also let make three wells, fair and noble ; and all environed with stone of jasper, of chrystal, diapered with gold, and set with pre-

cious stones, and great orient pearls. And he had made a conduit under earth, so that the three wells, at his list, one should run milk, another wine, and another honey. And that place he clept *Paradise*." Sir J. Maundevile, p. 336. ed. 1727.

*Compare Thomson's extract . . . from Sir J. Maundevile's*

## CHAPTER IV.

ROBERT OF GLOUCESTER.—VARIOUS SMALL POEMS APPARENTLY WRITTEN DURING THE LATTER PART OF THE THIRTEENTH CENTURY.—ROBERT DE BRUNNE.

WE are now arrived at the poet whom his editor, Mr. Hearne, emphatically calls "the British Ennius," but concerning whom we know little more, than that he was a monk of the abbey of Gloucester; that his Christian name was ROBERT; that he lived during the reigns of Henry III. and Edward I.; and that he wrote in English rhymes a history of England from the days of the imaginary Brutus to his own time. His work seems to have been completed about the year 1280. "This rhyming chronicle," says Mr. Warton, "is totally destitute of art or imagination. The author has clothed the fables of Geoffrey of Monmouth in rhyme, which have often a more poetical air in Geoffrey's prose. The language—is full of Saxonisms;—but this obscurity is, perhaps, owing to the western dialect, in which our monk of Gloucester was educated."

It would be quite hopeless to attempt a defence of ROBERT OF GLOUCESTER's poetry: perhaps his own wish was merely to render more generally intelligible a body of history which he considered as curious, and certainly believed to be authentic, because it was written in Latin, the language of truth and religion. Addressing himself to his illiterate countrymen, he employed the vulgar language as he found it, without any attempt at embellishment, or refinement; and, perhaps, wrote in rhyme, only because it was found to be an useful help to the memory, and gave his work a chance of being recited in

companies where it could not be read. The latter part of his poem, in which he relates the events of his own time, will not appear quite uninteresting to those who prefer the simple and desultory narratives of contemporary writers to the philosophical abridgments of the moderns ; and a great part of his obscurity will be found to result from that unnecessary mixture of the German, or black letter, with the Saxon characters, in which Mr. Hearne, from his inordinate appetite for antiquity, has thought proper to dress this ancient English author.

Robert of Gloucester, though cold and prosaic, is not quite deficient in the valuable talent of arresting the attention ; and the orations, with which he occasionally diversifies the thread of his story, are, in general, appropriate and dramatic, and not only prove his good sense, but exhibit no unfavourable specimens of his eloquence. In his description of the first crusade he seems to change his usual character, and becomes not only entertaining, but even animated ; and the vision, in which a "holy man" is ordered to reproach the Christians with their departure from their duty, and, at the same time, to promise them the divine intervention, to extricate them from a situation in which the exertions of human valour were apparently fruitless, would not, perhaps, to contemporary readers appear less poetical, nor less sublime and impressive, than the introduction of the heathen mythology into the works of the early classics. The expectations awakened by this grand incident are, indeed, miserably disappointed by the strange morality which our monk ascribes to the Supreme Being, who declares himself offended, not by the unnecessary cruelties of the crusaders, nor by the general profligacy of their manners, so much as by the reflection, that they

"With women of *Paynim* did their foul kind,  
Whereof the stench came into heaven on high."



But these absurdities and inconsistencies present, perhaps, a more lively picture of the reigning manners and opinions than could have been intentionally delineated by a writer of much superior abilities to Robert of Gloucester.

Our sententious annalist has given, in the following few lines, the same description which we have already examined, as exhibited more at length by Wace, and imitated by Layamon :

The king was to his palace, *tho*<sup>1</sup> the service was y-do,  
Y-lad with his *menye*<sup>2</sup>, and the queen to hers also.  
For *hii*<sup>3</sup> held the old usages, that men with men  
were

By *hem*<sup>4</sup> selve, and women by *hem* selve also there.  
*Tho hii* were each one y-set, as it to *her*<sup>5</sup> state  
become,

KAY, king of Anjou, a thousand knights *nome*<sup>6</sup>  
Of noble men, y-clothed in ermine each one  
*Of one suit*<sup>7</sup>, and served at this noble feast anon.  
BEDWER the butler, king of Normandy,  
*Nom also in his half*<sup>8</sup> a fair company,  
Of one suit, for to serve of the butlery.  
Before the queen it was also of all such courtesy.

<sup>1</sup> *When*, sometimes *then*, but never *though*, which our old authors sometimes spell *they*, sometimes *thogh*, &c. &c.

<sup>2</sup> Fr. Attendants.

<sup>3</sup> They.

<sup>4</sup> Them.

<sup>5</sup> Their.

<sup>6</sup> Took. Sax.

<sup>7</sup> In the same dress.

<sup>8</sup> *On his behalf*, or *on his part*. The use of the several prepositions was not fixed as it now is, but many of them were used indifferently. Repeated proofs of this occur in the present extract, and they are, therefore, marked in italics.

For to tell all the *nobleye* <sup>1</sup> that there was y-do,  
Though my tongue were of steel, me should nought  
*dure* <sup>2</sup> thereto.

Women *ne kept of* <sup>3</sup> no knight as in *druery* <sup>4</sup>,  
*But* <sup>5</sup> he were in arms well y-proved, and at least  
*thrye* <sup>6</sup>.

That made, lo, the women the chaster life lead,  
And the knights the *stalworder* <sup>7</sup>, and the better in  
*her* deed.

Soon after this noble *meat* <sup>8</sup>, as right was of such  
tide,

The knights *atyled* <sup>9</sup> *hem* about, in each side,  
In fields and in meads to prove *her bachelry* <sup>10</sup>,  
Some with lance, some with sword, without *vil-*  
*lany* <sup>11</sup>:

With playing at tables, *other* <sup>12</sup> at *chekere* <sup>13</sup>,  
With *casting*, *other with setting* <sup>14</sup>, *other* in some *ogyrt* <sup>15</sup>  
manere.

And which-so of any game had the mastery,  
The king *hem* of his gifts did large courtesy.

<sup>1</sup> Noble feats. Old Fr.

<sup>2</sup> Endure, last.

<sup>3</sup> Took no account of.

<sup>4</sup> Gallantry.

<sup>5</sup> Unless.

<sup>6</sup> Thrice.

<sup>7</sup> Bolder. Sax.

<sup>8</sup> Feast.

<sup>9</sup> Prepared, or, perhaps, armed. It seems to be the French word *atteller*; and the English word *harness* was also synonymous with armour.

<sup>10</sup> Knighthood. Fr.

<sup>11</sup> Meanness. Fr.

<sup>12</sup> Or.

<sup>13</sup> Chess. *Chekere* is properly a chess-board.

<sup>14</sup> This may possibly refer to tric-trac, or back-gammon; but casting and setting may also relate to throwing the bar.

<sup>15</sup> Other.

Up the *alurs*<sup>1</sup> of the castles the ladies then stood,  
And beheld this noble game, and which knights  
were good.

All the three *hext*<sup>2</sup> days y-laste this *nobleye*,  
In halls and in fields, of meat, and eke of play.  
These men came the fourth day before the king  
there,

And he gave *hem* large gifts, ever as *hii* worth were.  
Bishopricks and churches clerks he gave some,  
And castles and towns knights that were y-come<sup>3</sup>.

(P. 190.)

<sup>1</sup> The walks on the roof of the castle.

<sup>2</sup> *Highest*, or feast-days.

<sup>3</sup> For the purpose of showing how exactly Robert of Gloucester translates from his original, I shall here add the whole corresponding passage from Geoffrey of Monmouth.

Rex et regina diademata sua deponunt, assumptisque levioribus ornamentis, ille ad suum palatium cum viris, hæc ad aliud cum mulieribus, epulatum incedunt: antiquam namque consuetudinem Trojæ servantes Britones, consueverant mares cum maribus, mulieres cum mulieribus, festivos dies separatim celebrare.

Collocatis postmodum cunctis ut singulorum dignitas expetebat, Caius dapifer, herminio ornatus, mille vero nobilissimis juvenibus comitatus est, qui omnes, herminio induti, fercula cum ipso ministrabant. Ex aliâ vero parte Beduerum pincernam totidem vario amicti sequuntur, qui in scyphis diversorum generum multimoda pocula cum ipso distribuebant. In palatio quoque reginæ, innumerales ministri, diversis ornamentis induti, obsequium suum præstabant, morem suum exercentes; quem si omnino describere pergerem, nimiam historiæ prolixitatem generarem. Ad tantum etenim statum dignitatis Britannia tunc provecta erat, quod copiâ divitiarum, luxu ornamentorum, facetiâ incolarum, cetera regna excellebat. Quicumque ergo famosus probitate miles in eâdem erat unius coloris vestibis atque armis utebatur. Facetæ autem mulieres, consimilia indumenta habentes, nullius amorem habere dignabantur, nisi tertio in militiâ approbatus esset. Efficiebantur ergo castæ mulieres, et milites amore illarum meliores.

Refecti tandem epulis, diversi diversos ludos composituri, campos

The reader who compares the foregoing extract with the satirical piece contained in the last chapter, will probably think that Robert of Gloucester's language very nearly resembles that of his contemporaries, and is not particularly marked with Saxonisms or provincial phrases. The oddest peculiarity in his style is the strange use of the word *me*, which we have seen once used by Layamon, but which here occurs as a mere expletive in almost every page. There is an instance of it in the following couplet, which is not quoted for this reason, but because it relates to our literary history. Our author, speaking of Richard I., says,

"Me ne may not all tell here, ac whoso it will y-wite,  
In *romance* of him y-made *me* it may find y-write." (P. 487.)

The simple meaning of which seems to be, that he refers such of his readers as shall wish for farther details, to the *French* or *Romance* history of this monarch. Mr. Hearne, however, in his note on this passage, assures us that our grave historian here quotes a *fabulous* narrative; that it

extra civitatem adeunt. Mox milites, simulacrum prælii ciendo, equestrem ludum componunt: mulieres in edito murorum aspicientes in curiales amoris flammæ more \* joci irritant. Alii telis, alii hastâ, alii ponderosorum lapidum jactu, alii saxis, alii aleis, ceterorumque jocorum diversitate contendentes, quod diei restabat, postpositâ lite, prætereunt. Quicumque vero ludi sui victoriam adeptus erat, ab Arturio largis muneribus ditabatur. Consumptis ergo primis in hunc modum tribus diebus, instante quarto vocantur cuncti qui ipsi propter honores obsequium præstabant, et singuli singulis possessionibus, civitatibus videlicet, atque castellis, archiepiscopatibus, episcopatibus, abbatibus, ceterisque honoribus dotantur.

(Galfr. Mon. ed. 1517, p. 77, et ap. Rer. Brit. Script. Vet. 1587, p. 70, l. 29.)

The reader has already seen Wace's curious amplification of this picture.

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\* Amore, Ed. 1587.

is in English, in short verse, that he remembers to have seen it in print, and that for this reason, and because it is a very indifferent performance, it is not worth transcribing from his copy, which he distinguishes as Codex Ar., and, lest we should doubt the fact, he tells us all this in Latin. If there exist an English metrical romance on the life of Richard Cœur de Lion *anterior to Robert of Gloucester*, it is certainly a great curiosity.

It is, however, very probable, that a few of those compositions which we now call metrical romances, and which by older writers are termed *gests* (from the Latin word *gesta*, which was become the fashionable appellation of every learned story-book) were written about this time; because Robert de Brunne expressly mentions two poets, ERCELDOUN and KENDALE, as excelling in this mode of writing, and says of the story of *Sir Tristram*, that

Over *gestes* it has th' esteem :  
*Over all that is or was,*  
 If men it said, as made *Thomàs* <sup>1</sup>.

The bard who is thus distinguished from a crowd of competitors, is supposed to be Thomas Lermont of Ercildoun, or Erceldoune, a village in Tweeddale, generally known by the honourable appellation of *Thomas the Rhymer*, who lived in the reign of Edward I.; and was reputed (though it seems falsely) to be the author of some metrical prophecies not yet forgotten in Scotland. His contemporary Kendale is only known by the accidental mention of Robert de Brunne. There is, however, an unclaimed metrical romance apparently belonging to this period, which the generosity of future critics may possibly assign to him. This is the *Geste of King Horn*, preserved in a very curious miscellany in the British Museum,

<sup>1</sup> Hearne's Pref. to Langtoft, xcix.

(Harl. MSS. No. 2253,) and mentioned by Chaucer as one of the *romances of price*. Mr. Warton has given an excellent abridgment of it, together with a considerable extract, in the first volume of his *Hist. of Poetry*, p. 38<sup>1</sup>.

In the same manuscript which contains this romance are found some political satires of considerable merit; one of which was certainly composed in the year 1265 (it is inserted in Percy's *Reliques*, as is also an elegy on the death of Edward I. written in 1307): another, on the defeat of the French army by the Flemings, in 1301; and a ballad against the Scots, composed in 1306. As the first of these pieces may be considered as anterior to the composition of Robert of Gloucester's poem, and the others were written very soon after its conclusion, Mr. Warton seems to have employed them as terms of comparison, for the purpose of ascertaining by internal evidence the dates of several love-songs, devotional and moral poems, and other smaller pieces contained in the same miscellany. He was perhaps mistaken in referring some of these to so early a period as the year 1200; but they certainly appear to have been written near the middle of the thirteenth century; and, as specimens of our earliest lyric compositions are not unworthy of our curiosity, the reader is here presented with two, one of which is a moral ditty, and the other a love-song: both

<sup>1</sup> Having procured from the Museum a transcript of this very curious work, I should not have failed to insert it entire, but that I had reason to hope that the task of editing it would fall into much better hands. The reader will certainly learn with pleasure that Mr. Ritson has it in contemplation to publish a series of our old metrical romances, many of which exist only in manuscript. Such a work, executed by him, is likely to prove the most valuable repertory of early language and manners that has yet been presented to the public.

Since this note was written, Mr. Ritson's projected publication has been completed in three volumes, and contains the romance in question.

copied from the volume of ancient songs published by Mr. Ritson, who has corrected some trifling mistakes committed by Mr. Warton in decyphering the obsolete characters of the ancient MS.

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## DITTY

*Upon the Uncertainty of this Life, and the Approach  
of Death.*

Winter wakeneth all my care ;  
Now these leaves waxeth bare.  
Oft I sigh, and mourne sare,  
When it cometh in my thought,  
Of this world's joy, how it go'th all to nought !

Now it is, and now it n'is,  
All so <sup>1</sup> *it ne'er n'were* I wis :  
That many men saith, sooth it is,  
All go'th <sup>2</sup> but Godes will :  
All we shall die, *though us like ill* <sup>3</sup>.

All that grain me groweth green ;  
Now, it *falloweth* <sup>4</sup> *all by-dene* <sup>5</sup>.  
Jesu help, *that it be seen* <sup>6</sup>,  
And shield us from hell,  
For I n'ot <sup>7</sup> whither I shall, ne how long here dwell.

<sup>1</sup> As if it had never been.

<sup>2</sup> Passeth away.

<sup>3</sup> Though we may dislike it?

<sup>4</sup> Fadeth.

<sup>5</sup> Presently.

<sup>6</sup> The meaning seems to be, "May Jesu help us so that *his help* may be manifest."

<sup>7</sup> Ne wot, know not.

## SONG

*In Praise of the Author's Mistress, whose Name was*

ALYSOUN.

Between March and Averil,  
 When spray beginneth to spring,  
 The little fowl hath *hire* will  
 On *hire lud* <sup>1</sup> to sing.

I live in love-longing  
 For *seemlokest* <sup>2</sup> of alle thing  
 She may me blisse bring,

I am in her *bandoûn* <sup>3</sup>.  
 An *hendy* <sup>4</sup> hap I have *y-hent* <sup>5</sup>,  
*Ichot* <sup>6</sup> from heaven it is me sent,  
 From all women my love is lent,  
 And '*light*' on Alysoun.

On *hen* <sup>8</sup> her hair is fair enough,  
 Her brow brown, her eye black :  
 With *lossum* <sup>9</sup> cheer she on me *lough* <sup>10</sup>  
 With middle small and well y-mak.

<sup>1</sup> Songs, or odes. The word *leudi* occurs in the same sense in the barbarous Latin of the times, as Mr. Pinkerton has justly observed.

<sup>2</sup> Seemliest, handsomest.

<sup>3</sup> Command. Fr.

<sup>4</sup> Lucky.

<sup>5</sup> Caught.

<sup>6</sup> I think.

<sup>7</sup> Alighted.

<sup>8</sup> This apparently inexplicable phrase is perhaps an error of the transcribers.

<sup>9</sup> Lovesome, lovely.

<sup>10</sup> Laughs.



*But* <sup>1</sup> she will me to her take,  
 For to been her *owen* *make* <sup>2</sup>,  
 Long to liven I shall forsake,  
 And, *fay* <sup>3</sup>! fallen adown.  
 An hendy hap, &c.

Nightes, when I wend and wake,  
 For thee my *wonges* <sup>4</sup> waxeth wan :  
 Lady all for thine sake  
 Longing is y-lent me on !  
 In world n'is non so *wyter* <sup>5</sup> man,  
 That all her *bounty* <sup>6</sup> telle can :  
 Her *swire* <sup>7</sup> is whiter than the swan,  
 And fairest *may* <sup>8</sup> in town.  
 An hendy hap, &c.

I am, for wooing, all for weak,  
 Weary, so water in *wore* <sup>9</sup> ;  
 Lest any *reave* <sup>10</sup> me my *make*  
 I shall be *y-yearned* <sup>11</sup> sore.  
 Better is *tholien* <sup>12</sup> *while* <sup>13</sup> sore  
 Than mournen evermore.

<sup>1</sup> Unless.<sup>3</sup> In faith. Fr.<sup>5</sup> Wise.<sup>7</sup> Neck.<sup>9</sup> Wear, pool.<sup>11</sup> Vexed, anxious.<sup>13</sup> Awhile.<sup>2</sup> Own mate.<sup>4</sup> Cheeks. Sax.<sup>6</sup> Excellence, *bonté*. Fr.<sup>8</sup> Virgin. Sax.<sup>10</sup> Bereave me of.<sup>12</sup> To suffer. Sax.

*Gainest under gore* <sup>1</sup>,  
 Hearken to my *roun* <sup>2</sup> !  
 An hendi hap, &c.

It is not impossible that Chaucer, at the same time that he ridiculed the romances, may have intended to laugh at the fashionable love-songs of his age ; for in his rhyme of Sir Thopas he has borrowed two apparently affected phrases from the foregoing composition.

Sire Thopas fell in *love-longing*  
 All when he heard the throstle sing.

And afterwards :

Me dreamed all this night, pardie,  
 An elf-queen shall my lemman be,  
 And sleep *under my gore*.

To the same period with the foregoing we ought, perhaps, to refer the following short descriptive song, preserved by Sir John Hawkins in his *History of Music*, vol. ii. p. 93 :—

Summer is y-comen in,  
 Loude sing cuckoo :  
 Groweth seed,  
 And *bloweth* <sup>3</sup> mead,

<sup>1</sup> Perhaps, "Most graceful in dress." The word *gainest* occurs in the same sense in Dunbard's "Twa mariit Women," verse 78. *Ungain* is still used in the provinces for the opposite idea ; and *gore* appears to be the same with *gear*, dress, from the Saxon *gearwa*, vestis.

<sup>2</sup> Song.

<sup>3</sup> Blooms.

And spring'th the wood now :  
 Sing cuckoo !  
 Ewe bleateth after lamb,  
 Low'th after calf cow .  
 Bullock starteth,  
 Buck *verteth* <sup>1</sup>,  
 Merry sing cuckoo !  
 Cuckoo, cuckoo !  
 Well sings thou cuckoo !  
 Ne *swick* <sup>2</sup> thou never now.

The first poet who occurs in the beginning of the fourteenth century is ROBERT MANNYNG, commonly called ROBERT DE BRUNNE. He was, as far as we know, merely a translator. His first work, says Mr. Warton, was a metrical paraphrase of a French book, written by Robert Grossthead, bishop of Lincoln, called *Manuele Pecche* (*Manuel des Péchés*), being a treatise on the decalogue, and on the seven deadly sins, which are illustrated with many legendary stories. It was never printed, but is preserved in the Bodleian library. MSS. No. 415, and in the British Museum, MSS. Harl. No. 1701.

His second and more important work is a *metrical chronicle of England*, in two parts, the former of which (from Æneas to the death of Cadwallader) is translated from Wace's *Brut d'Angleterre*, and the latter (from Cadwallader to the end of the reign of Edward I.) from a French chronicle, written by *Peter de Langtoft*, an Augustine canon of Bridlington, in Yorkshire, who is

<sup>1</sup> Goes to harbour among the fern.

<sup>2</sup> Cease.

supposed to have died in the reign of Edward II., and was, therefore, contemporary with his translator.

Robert de Brunne has furnished his biographers with the only particulars that are known concerning his life. In the prologue to his first work he says that he had lived fifteen years at Brunne, in the priory of black canons, when he began his translation in 1303. He was therefore received into the order in 1288, and was probably born before 1270. With respect to his second work, he says,

Of Brunne I am, if any me blame,  
 Robert Mannyng is my name :  
 Blessed be he of God of heaven  
 That me Robert with good will *neven* <sup>1</sup>.  
 In the third Edward's time was I  
 When I wrote all this story.  
 In the house of Sixille I was a *throw* <sup>2</sup>.  
 Dan Robert of Malton that ye know  
 Did it write for fellows' sake,  
 When they willed solace make.  
 (Hearne's Pref. to Pet. Langt. ci.)

By this passage he seems to mean, that he was born at a place called Malton ; that he had resided some time at a house in the neighbourhood called Sixhill ; and that *there* he, Robert de Brunne, had composed at least a part of his poem during the *reign of Edward III.* Mr. Warton, therefore, is perhaps inaccurate in his account of this author, when he says, that " he was a Gilbertine monk in the monastery of Brunne, or Bourne, near Depyng in

<sup>1</sup> Names.

<sup>2</sup> For some time.

Lincolnshire : but he had been *before* professed in the priory of Sixhill, a house of the same order, and in the same county."

Mr. Hearne, the editor of Robert de Brunne, has thought fit to suppress the whole of his translation from Wace, excepting the prologue, and a few extracts which he found necessary to illustrate his glossary. The learned antiquary perhaps thought that, having carefully preserved the whole of Robert of Gloucester's faithful and almost literal version of Geoffrey of Monmouth, it was unnecessary to print the more licentious paraphrase which had passed through the medium of a Norman poet. The following description of the first interview between Vortigern and Rowena is one of the few specimens that he has preserved. It is not given as an example of beautiful poetry, or of refined language, for its style is scarcely to be distinguished from that of the Monk of Gloucester ; but it is a curious description of ancient manners :—

Of chamber Rouwen so gent,  
 Before the king in hall *scho*<sup>1</sup> went ;  
 A cup with wine she had in hand,  
 And her attire was *well-farànd*<sup>2</sup> ;  
 Before the king one knee set,  
 And *on* her language *scho* him gret :  
 " *Laverid*<sup>3</sup> king, *Wassaille* ! " said she.  
 The king asked what should be ?  
*On* that language the king ne *couth*<sup>4</sup>.  
 A knight *ther* language *lerid*<sup>5</sup> in youth :

<sup>1</sup> She.<sup>2</sup> Very becoming.<sup>3</sup> Lord.<sup>4</sup> Knew.<sup>5</sup> Learned.

Breg hight that knight, born Bretoùn,  
 That *lerid* the language of *Sessouñ* <sup>1</sup> :  
 This Breg was the *latimer* <sup>2</sup>,  
 What *scho* said told Vortager.  
 "Sir," Breg said, "Rouwen you gretis,  
 And king calls, and lord you *letis* <sup>3</sup>.  
 This is their custom and their gest,  
 When they are at the ale, or feast ;  
 Ilk man that loves where him think,  
 Shall say, *Wassaille* ! and to him drink.  
 He that *bids* <sup>4</sup> shall say *Wassaille* !  
 The tother shall say again *Drinkhaille* !  
 That says *Wassaille* ! drinks of the cup ;  
*Kissand* <sup>5</sup> his fellow he gives it up.  
*Drinkhaille* ! he says, and drinks thereof,  
*Kissand* him in *bourd* and *scoff* <sup>6</sup>."

The king said, as the knight *gan ken* <sup>7</sup>,  
 " *Drinkhaille* !" smiland on Rouwèn.  
 Rouwen drank, as her list,  
 And gave the king ; *sine* <sup>8</sup> him kist.

<sup>1</sup> Saxon.

<sup>2</sup> *Latinier*. Fr. ; an interpreter.

<sup>3</sup> Esteems.

<sup>4</sup> Invites.

<sup>5</sup> Kissing. This is the usual termination of the participle in old English, as it is in French.

<sup>6</sup> In sport and in play.

<sup>7</sup> "As the knight had signified." The word *gan* (began) is often used to form the tenses of verbs.

<sup>8</sup> Since, afterwards.

There was the first *Wassaille* in deed,  
 And that first of fame *geed* <sup>1</sup>.  
 Of that *Wassaille* men told great tale, &c.

\* \* \* \* \*

*Fele sithes* <sup>2</sup> that maiden ying  
*Wassailed*, and kist the king.  
 Of body she was right *avenant* <sup>3</sup>,  
 Of fair colour, with sweet *semblant* <sup>4</sup>:  
 Her attire full well it seemed;  
 Marvellich the king she *quemed* <sup>5</sup>.  
 Out of measure was he glad,  
 For of that maiden he *wex* <sup>6</sup> all mad.  
 Drunkenness the fiend wrought:  
 Of that *paen* <sup>7</sup> was all his thought.  
 A mischance that time him led;  
 He asked that *paen* for to wed, &c.

(Glossary to Rob. of Gloucest. p. 695.)

It is hoped that the reader will forgive a second extract from this obsolete author, in support of a conjecture started by Mr. Hearne, who (as Mr. Warton justly observes) is not often fortunate in his conjectures. He supposes that many of our ancient ballads were nothing more than extracts from metrical chronicles written by persons of learning; and that such relations were styled

<sup>1</sup> Went.

<sup>2</sup> Many times.

<sup>3</sup> Handsome. Fr.

<sup>4</sup> Appearance.

<sup>5</sup> Pleased.

<sup>6</sup> Grew.

<sup>7</sup> *Payenne*, Fr. Pagan.

ancient *gests*, in opposition to *romances*. It is not intended to defend the latter position, because the word *gest*, which signified an action, or adventure, was never opposed to the word *romance*, which was originally applied to language only : but a considerable part of Robert de Brunne's chronicle is in fact broken into small parts, which have all the appearance of a series of ballads ; and the author, as he proceeded in his work, acquired such a facility in rhyming, as to be enabled to write a considerable part of his translation from Langtoft in what is now considered as the genuine ballad metre, that is to say, what de Brunne himself calls the rhyme *entrelacée*. The reader will judge from the following extract, part of which is printed by Mr. Warton, and given in its original Alexandrine form. It is a chapter beginning at p. 182 of Hearne's edition.

Richard at *Godis board* <sup>1</sup>

His mass had and his rights :

Hear now *swilk* <sup>2</sup> a word

He spake to his knights.

“ Of this king Philip

Have we no manner of help :

Together, I *rede* <sup>3</sup>, we keep,

That men of us *yelp* <sup>4</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> At the altar, God's table.

<sup>2</sup> Such.

<sup>3</sup> I advise.

<sup>4</sup> To cry, wail, boast ; the meaning is, “ that men may talk loudly of us.”



“ I vow to Saint Michaël,  
 And *till hallows* <sup>1</sup> that are,  
 That, for woe, ne weal,  
*Hithen* <sup>2</sup> ne shall I fare,

“ Ne till Acre go,  
 Till the castle be taken  
 That Philip went fro,  
 For us has *it* <sup>3</sup> forsaken.

“ For his own default  
*With* <sup>4</sup> us he has envie.  
 Go we to the assault,  
 That God us all *condie* <sup>5</sup> ! ”

The dikes were full wide  
 That clos'd the castle about ;  
 And deep on *ilka* <sup>6</sup> side,  
 With bankis high without.

Was there none entrè  
 That to the castel *gan ligge* <sup>7</sup>  
 But a straight causè ;  
 At the end a draw-brigge :

<sup>1</sup> “ To the saints that are.”

<sup>2</sup> Hence.

<sup>3</sup> Apparently an error of the transcriber, for *he*.

<sup>4</sup> Against. Sax. In the same sense we should say, he is angry with us.

<sup>5</sup> Conduct.

<sup>6</sup> Each.

<sup>7</sup> Lay.

With great double chains  
 Drawn over the gate ;  
 And fifty armed swains,  
 Porters at that gate.

With slings and *magneles* <sup>1</sup>  
 They cast to king Richàrd,  
 Our Christians, by *parceles*,  
 Casted again-wàrd.

Ten serjeants, of the best,  
 His *targe* <sup>2</sup> gan him bear ;  
 That eager were, and *prest* <sup>3</sup>  
 To cover him, and to *wear* <sup>4</sup>.

Himself, as a giànt,  
 The chaines in two hew :  
 The targe was his *warrànt* <sup>5</sup>,  
 That none 'till him threw.

Right unto the gate  
 With the targe they *geed* <sup>6</sup> :

<sup>1</sup> *Mangonels*. Fr. A sort of catapulta which threw large stones, and was employed for the purpose of battering walls.

<sup>2</sup> Shield; apparently a sort of mantelet serving as a portable rampart.

<sup>3</sup> Ready. Fr.

<sup>4</sup> Defend; *wasan*. Sax.

<sup>5</sup> Security; *garant*. Fr.

<sup>6</sup> Went; but *geed* seems the proper perfect tense of the verb *go*, or *gee*, as *went* is of *wendan*. Sax.).

Fightand *on a gate*<sup>1</sup>,  
Under him they slew his steed.

Therefore ne will'd he cease;  
Alone into the castèl  
Through them all will'd press :  
On foot fought he full well.

And when he was within,  
And fought as a wild liòn,  
He *fonder'd*<sup>2</sup> the Saracens o'twain,  
And fought as a dragòn.

Without, the Christians gan cry,  
" Alas ! Richard is taken !"  
The Normans were sorry,  
Of countenance gan blacken.

To slay down and to 'stroy,  
Never will'd they stint :  
*They left for dead no 'noy*<sup>3</sup>,  
Ne for no wound no dint.

<sup>1</sup> " At the gate," says Mr. Hearne.—Quære if it does not mean *on a time* ? as in *all-gates*, i. e. (*toutes fois*. Fr.) at all times, always.

<sup>2</sup> Forced (Hearne's Glossary). Perhaps, however, it is a mistake of the transcriber for *sonder'd*, i. e. *sundered*, separated.

<sup>3</sup> " They would not leave off, either on account of the dead who fell round them, or of the annoyance of the enemy."

That in went all their press,  
 Maugre the Saracens all,  
 And found Richard on *des* <sup>1</sup>  
 Fightand, and won the hall.

Nobody but he alone  
 Unto the Christians came ;  
 And slain he had ilk-one  
 The lords, but three he *name* <sup>2</sup>.

With tho three alive  
 His messengers went ;  
 Till Acre gan they drive,  
 To Philip made presènt.

Mr. Warton has given us a very long extract from an English translation of a work written by *Grosthed*, bishop of Lincoln, in French verse, and called by Leland *Chateau d'Amour*, which he conjectures to be from the pen of Robert de Brunne ; and Hearne ascribes to him, though perhaps without reason, the metrical English romance of *Richard Cœur de Lion*. He was, upon the whole, an industrious and certainly (for the time) an elegant writer ; and his extraordinary facility of rhyming (a talent, indeed, in which he has been seldom surpassed), must have rendered his works an useful study to succeeding versifiers.

<sup>1</sup> Probably a *platform* ; and for this reason the principal table in the hall, being elevated above the common floor, was particularly called the *des*. The canopy placed over such a table afterwards acquired the same name. Hence a good deal of dispute about the meaning of the word ; but the conjecture here given, which is Mr. Tyrwhitt's, appears the most reasonable.

<sup>2</sup> Took. Sax.

## CHAPTER V.

*Reign of Edward II. (1307 to 1327.)*

CHANGE IN THE LANGUAGE PRODUCED BY FREQUENT  
TRANSLATIONS FROM THE FRENCH.—MINSTRELS.—  
SOURCES OF ROMANCE.—ADAM DAVIE.—SPECIMENS OF  
HIS LIFE OF ALEXANDER.—ROBERT BASTON.

DURING the first period of our poetry, comprehending the greater part of the thirteenth, and about half of the fourteenth century, our English versifiers are divided into two classes, the ecclesiastics and lay-minstrels, who are generally distinguished from each other by a very different choice of subjects; the former exhibiting their talents in metrical lives of the saints, or in rhyming chronicles; the latter in satirical pieces, and love-songs. Tales of chivalry, being equally the favourites of all descriptions of men, were, to a certain degree, the common property of both.

There is reason to believe that a marked difference of style and language was apparent in the compositions of these rival poets, because the inferior orders of the priesthood, and the several monastic societies, being chiefly conversant with the inhabitants of the country and of the villages, were likely to retain more of the Saxon phraseology, and to resist the influx of French innovations much longer than their competitors: and it is principally to this circumstance that it seems reasonable to attribute those peculiarities of style, which Mr. Warton thought he discovered in Robert of Gloucester, and which he has ascribed to the provincial situation of the writer.

The northern provinces, it is true, on account, perhaps, of their long subjection to the Danes, are represented by John de Trevisa (in a passage often quoted) as differing materially in their pronunciation from those of the south : but Gloucester is not a northern county. The charge of provincial barbarism might with more justice be imputed to Robert de Brunne, as being a native of Yorkshire ; but he has taken care to assure us that his simple and unadorned diction was the result of care and design ; that he considers his “fellows” as the depositaries of pure and true English ; that he

— “made nought for no *disours*<sup>1</sup>,  
Ne for no *seggers*<sup>2</sup>, no *harpours*.  
But for the love of simple men  
That *strange English* cannot ken.”

[De Brunne's Prol. Vide Hearne's Pref. xcix.]

These *disours*, or *seggers*, he tells us, took the most unwarrantable liberties with the diction of the works they recited ; and he omits no opportunity of protesting against their licentious innovations in our language.

The reader, who shall take the pains of comparing a few pages of the glossary annexed by Mr. Tyrwhitt to his edition of Chaucer, with that which Mr. Hearne has compiled for the illustration of Robert de Brunne, will probably think that our author's complaints were just, and that the language of the city and inns of court was much more infected with Gallicisms than that of the monasteries ; although a rapid change in both appears to have taken place during the reign of Edward III. Many of the Norman words then introduced have, indeed, long since become obsolete, and the Saxon has recovered its superiority ; because the gradual dissemination of wealth

<sup>1</sup> *Diseurs*. Fr. Reciters.

<sup>2</sup> *Sayers*, the English name for the same profession.

and liberty and learning among the common people has, in some measure, blended in our language all the provincial dialects; but the torrent of fashion, at the period of which we are now treating, was irresistible. It was, perhaps, in some degree assisted by the practice of the dignified ecclesiastics, who, when they did not write in Latin, universally affected to use the French language; but it is principally to be ascribed to the numerous translations which were made at this time from the French writers of those fabulous histories which we now call *romances*. Such translations were hastily written, because eagerly called for; and their authors took the liberty (in which they were imitated by the *disours* or reciters) of admitting without scruple such "*strange*" words as happened to suit their rhyme, as well as those for which they could not immediately recollect the correspondent term in English.

As the public reciters here mentioned by Robert de Brunne may possibly be unknown to many readers, it will perhaps be proper in this place to take some notice of them, as well as of the minstrels, with whom they were nearly connected.

It appears that, during the reign of our Norman kings, a poet, who was also expected to unite with the talent of versifying those of music and recitation, was a regular officer in the royal household, as well as in those of the more wealthy nobles, whose courts were composed upon the same model. This practice seems to have originated in the admiration which all the northern nations entertained for their ancient *scalds*; and it gave rise to the appellation of *minstrel* (*ministrellus*, an officer or servant), which therefore, as Dr. Percy has observed in his learned dissertation on this subject, was not strictly synonymous with that of *joueur*, or *jongleur* (*joculator*), called in old English a *glee-man*, *juggler*, or *jangler*; because the latter might or might not be attached to a particular patron,

and frequently travelled from castle to castle, for the purpose of reciting his compositions during the principal festivals. But as it is very difficult for the same person to attain equal excellence in all the sister arts, the professions of the poet, the harper, and the reciter, were afterwards undertaken by several associates, all of whom, on account of the privileges attached to the official minstrels, thought fit to assume the same honourable but equivocal title.

That these purveyors of poetry and music to the king and principal barons were, during the eleventh, twelfth, and thirteenth centuries, a privileged class, is perfectly certain from the universal testimony of contemporary writers. Indeed they were essential, not only to their amusement, but, in a great measure, to their education ; because even the use of arms, and the management of a horse, were scarcely more necessary to a courteous knight than the talent of playing on the harp, and composing a song in praise of his mistress. But in the course of the fourteenth century the minstrels, in France at least, had greatly declined in talents and reputation. There was a street at Paris, called *la Rue St. Julien des Menétriers*, peculiarly appropriated to their habitation ; and they had a fraternity, or *confrérie*, in the church of that saint, the well-known patron of hospitality : but these minstrels are described as a set of pantomimical fiddlers, accompanied by monkeys or bears, who were hired at weddings for the amusement of the guests : so much had they degenerated from the ingenious inventors of the *fabliaux*.

The history of this order of men in England is, for various reasons, very obscure and embarrassed. On the one hand, it is evident that if English began to be introduced at court as a colloquial language about the beginning of the fourteenth century, it was not yet considered, either by our kings, or by the nobles, or by the dignitaries of the church, as fitted for literary purposes :



and as our native minstrels, not having yet attempted any original poetry, could only have offered to their courtly audience translations much more barbarous, and at the same time less familiar to their ears, than the compositions of the French *trouveurs*, it is not likely that such rivals could have displaced the Norman minstrels, already established in the post for which they were candidates. On the other hand, the testimony of Robert de Brunne to the existence of a body of *disours*, or *seggers*, accustomed to recite English metrical compositions in public, who were listened to with applause, and habituated to make arbitrary alterations in the language or metre of such compositions, is direct and positive. The most obvious solution of this difficulty would be to suppose, that the more opulent inhabitants of the towns, in imitation of their superiors, had adopted the mode of introducing at their banquets the amusements of music and recitation, and thus laid the foundation of a native minstrelsy on the French model; and this order of men, being once established, might, on the decline of the rival language, find their way to the castles of our nobility; to which they would be recommended by their previous exhibitions at the neighbouring fairs, where they never failed to appear as attendants on the merchants.

Indeed we have numerous proofs of their increasing popularity; for Chaucer, in his address to his *Troilus* and *Cressida*, tells us that it was intended to be read "or elles *sung*," which must relate to the chanting recitation of the minstrels; and a considerable part of our old poetry is simply addressed to an *audience*, without any mention of readers.

That our English minstrels at any time united all the talents of the profession, and were at once poets, and reciters, and musicians, is extremely doubtful: but that they excited and directed the efforts of their contemporary poets to a particular species of composition, is as

evident as that a body of actors must influence the exertions of theatrical writers. They were, at a time when reading and writing were rare accomplishments, the principal medium of communication between authors and the public ; and their memory in some measure supplied the deficiency of manuscripts, and probably preserved much of our early literature till the invention of printing : so that their history, if it could be collected, would be by no means uninteresting. But our materials for this purpose are too scanty to enable us to ascertain the date of their formation, their progress, or their disappearance. Judging from external evidence, we should be disposed to place the period of their greatest celebrity a little before the middle of the fifteenth century ; because at that time our language had been successively improved by the writings of Gower, Chaucer, and Lydgate : much wealth and luxury had been introduced by the two victorious reigns of Edward III. and Henry V., and the country had not yet suffered any distress either from internal revolution, or from the length and disastrous termination of the war with France. The general poverty and discontent that prevailed during the subsequent period, the declension of chivalry, and the almost utter extirpation of our principal nobles, during the contest between the houses of York and Lancaster, must have been fatal to the prosperity of the minstrels : and two causes of a different nature, viz. the invention of printing in 1474, and the taste for religious disputation introduced by Henry VIII., may have tended to complete their ruin.

Though the minstrel character be now lost both in England and France, the traces of it are not universally effaced. In Wales, the modern harper is occasionally found to possess the accomplishments of the ancient bard ; and among the Italians, the *improvisatori* of Rome and Florence, who are usually ready to attend the table of a traveller, and greet him with an extemporary poem on

any subject which he shall prescribe, and protracted to a length which is only measured by his patience, are no bad representations of the antique minstrels ; particularly when they are accompanied (as frequently happens) by an attendant musician, who gives the tone to their recitative, and fills up the pauses between the stanzas by a few notes on his instrument. The third character, or *disour*, is also to be found in many parts of Italy, but particularly at Venice ; where, mounted on a temporary scaffolding, or sometimes on a stool or barrel, he recites from memory whole cantos of Ariosto.

The situation of a minstrel prescribed to him the choice of his subject. Addressing himself to an audience who lived only for the purpose of fighting, and who considered their time as of little value when otherwise employed, he was sure of being listened to with patience and credulity so long as he could tell of heroes and enchanters : and he could be at no loss for either, because the histories of all the heroes and enchanters that the world had produced were to be found in a few volumes of easy access.

As vanity is not easily subdued, a people who are not quite satisfied with their present insignificance will often be tempted to indemnify themselves by a retrospective warfare on their enemies ; and will be the more prodigal in assigning triumphs to their heroic ancestors, because those who in former ages contested the battle can no longer be brought forward to dispute the claim of victory. This will explain the numerous triumphs of KING ARTHUR. We have already seen, that a book in the British tongue, containing the relation of his exploits, and those of his knights of the round table, and of his faithful enchanter, Merlin, together with the antecedent history of the British kings from the destruction of Troy, was by Walter, Archdeacon of Oxford, a learned antiquary of those days, confided to GEOFFREY OF MONMOUTH, a Welsh Benedictine monk, afterwards the Bishop

of St. Asaph, who translated it into Latin, with some additions and interpolations. The French translations of Wace and Rusticien de Pise<sup>1</sup>, and the Saxon and English versions of Layamon and Robert de Brunne, laid open this mass of history to readers of every description.

A *second* work, equally abounding in marvellous adventures, and apparently written about the same time with Geoffrey of Monmouth's chronicle, is THE HISTORY OF CHARLEMAGNE AND THE TWELVE PEERS OF FRANCE, forged under the name of TURPIN, a monk of the eighth century, who, for his services against the Saracens, was raised to the archbishoprick of Rheims. The real author was perhaps a Spaniard. This work was translated from Latin into French by Michael de Harnes, in 1207<sup>2</sup>.

The *third* source of romantic fiction was THE HISTORY OF TROY. Homer's works were unknown at the period of which we are speaking, but the story was kept alive in two Latin pieces, which passed under the names of DARES PHRYGIUS, and DICTYS CRETENSIS; and from these, as we have already seen, a French poem on the Trojan war had been compiled by Benoit de St. More, the contemporary and rival of Wace. A more improved compilation from the same sources, under the title of *Historia de Bello Trojano*, comprehending the Theban and Argonautic stories, from Ovid, Statius, and Valerius Flaccus, was written by GUIDO DE COLONNA, a native of Messina, about the year 1260.

ALEXANDER THE GREAT was known to the writers of romance not only by translations from Quintus Curtius, an author much admired in the middle ages, but also by

<sup>1</sup> Vide supra, p. 44.

<sup>2</sup> Mr. Ritson says that Michael de Harnes did not translate the pseudo-Turpin's History of Roland's achievements in Spain, but a very different work, comprehending the adventures of another of Charlemagne's knights, viz. Renaud de Montauban.

a work much better suited to the purposes of the historians of chivalry, originally written in Persic, and translated into Greek, under the assumed name of Calisthenes, by SIMEON SETH, keeper of the wardrobe at Constantinople to the emperor Michael Ducas, about the year 1070. Such a narrative could not fail of obtaining a very general circulation. A Latin translation of it is quoted by Giraldus Cambrensis; and the famous *Roman d'Alexandre*, written (as Fauchet tells us) about the year 1200, by four confederates "en jonglerie," appears to be partly a paraphrase of that translation.

THESE FOUR WORKS may be considered as the foundation on which was erected the vast Gothic fabric of romance; and materials for the superstructure were readily found in an age when anecdotes and apologues were thought very necessary even to discourses delivered from the pulpit, and when all the fables that could be gleaned from ancient writings, or from the relations of travellers, were collected into story-books, and preserved by the learned for that purpose.

The *GESTA ROMANORUM*, a work of this description, which is still very common, appears to have had so great an influence on the literature of Europe during the romantic ages, that Mr. Warton has thought it deserving of a dissertation of ninety-seven pages. He also mentions a manuscript collection of 215 stories, preserved in the Museum, which was evidently compiled by a professed preacher for the use of the monastic societies. The legendary lives of the saints were no bad repositories of anecdote: and the bards of Armorica, who had supplied Geoffrey of Monmouth's regular history, continued to contribute detached fragments, or what we might now call memoirs, of the court of King Arthur, which were successfully converted into French lays and fabliaux.

If we should search in real history for a model of that imaginary excellence which constituted a hero of romance,

we should find it in the person of our Richard I. He was profusely liberal, particularly to the minstrels: he was, perhaps, himself a minstrel; he possessed the most astonishing bodily strength, and the most intrepid valour, sufficiently blended with enthusiasm, and directed to no intelligible purpose. The poets whom he patronized, would have been no less deficient in taste than in gratitude, had they failed to place him after his death among the heroes whom he imitated, and perhaps surpassed; particularly as the materials for his apotheosis were to be found in all languages and countries. Tanner mentions, (says Mr. Warton,) as a poet of England, one Gulielmus Peregrinus, who accompanied Richard I. into the Holy Land, and sung his achievements there, in a Latin poem, entitled *Odoeporicon Ricardi Regis*, dedicated to Herbert, Archbishop of Canterbury, and Stephen Turnham, a captain in the expedition. He is called "Poeta per eam ætatem excellens." The French minstrels in Richard's army were so numerous, that the writer of his life would only be embarrassed by the trouble of selection; and it may be supposed that his romance must have been finished by the middle of the thirteenth century, because it is referred to by Robert of Gloucester as a work already in general circulation. When or by whom it was translated is not known; but as the exploits of so popular a monarch were likely to find their way into the language of his subjects as soon as the art of rhyming began to be generally practised in England, we may safely refer the translation to the reign of Edward II.

To the same period Mr. Warton also assigns the popular stories of SIR GUY, THE SQUIRE OF LOW DEGREE, SIR DEGORE, KING ROBERT OF SICILY, THE KING OF TARs, IPOMEDON, and LA MORT ARTUR; from all of which he has given us extracts. But as he suspects that they have, in common with the romance of Richard Cœur de Lion, undergone considerable alterations in their language from

frequent transcription, it may be proper to dismiss them for the present, and pass on to the only writer of English rhymes in this reign whose name has been transmitted to us, and whose works appear to have been preserved in their original simplicity of language ; this is ADAM DAVIE. "He may be placed," says Mr. Warton, "about the year 1312. I can collect no circumstances of his life, but that he was marshall of Stratford-le-bow, near London. He has left several poems never printed, which are almost as forgotten as his name. Only one manuscript of these pieces now remains, which seems to be coeval with its author." It is in the Bodleian library <sup>1</sup> (MSS. Laud. i. 74, fol. membran.), "has been much damaged, and on that account is often illegible."

Adam Davie's works consist of *Visions ; The Battle of Jerusalem ; The Legend of St. Alexius ; Scripture Histories ; Of fifteen tokens before the Day of Judgment ; Lamentations of Souls ;* and *THE LIFE OF ALEXANDER*. This last is his principal work, and, as we are told, well deserves to be printed entire. It is founded on Simeon Seth's history, lately mentioned, but with many passages that are apparently borrowed from the French Roman d'Alexandre.

The following is the description of a splendid procession made by Queen Olympias :

<sup>2</sup> In this time, fair and *jolȳf*<sup>3</sup>,  
Olympias, that faire wife,

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Warton afterwards pointed out another MS. of *the Life of Alexander* in the library of Lincoln's Inn, (Hist. of E. P. vol. iii. xxxiii.) from which a transcript has been lately made with a view to publication.

<sup>2</sup> Mr. Warton not having transcribed the MS. correctly, these extracts have been revised from the original in the Bodleian.

<sup>3</sup> Pretty. Fr.

Woulde make a riche *fest*  
 Of knightes, and ladiès *honèst* <sup>1</sup>,  
 Of burges, and of jugelers,  
 And of men of each *mestèrs* <sup>2</sup>.

\* \* \* \*

Mickle she desireth to shew her body,  
 Her fair hair, her face *rody*,  
 To have *lees* <sup>3</sup>, and all praisìng :  
 And all is folly ! by heaven king!

\* \* \* \*

In faire attire in diverse quaintise  
 Many there rode in riche wise.  
 So did the dame Olympias  
 For to show her *gentil* <sup>4</sup> face.  
 A mule also, white so milk,  
 With saddle of gold, *sambu* <sup>5</sup> of silk,  
 Was y-brought to the queen,  
 And many bell of silver sheen,  
 Y-fasten'd on *orfreys* of mound <sup>6</sup>  
 That hangen nigh down to ground.

<sup>1</sup> Well-bred. Fr.

<sup>2</sup> Trade, occupation. Fr.

<sup>3</sup> Commendation. Fr.

<sup>4</sup> Elegant. Fr.

<sup>5</sup> A saddle-cloth, or housing. Fr.

<sup>6</sup> *Orfrais*, *aurifrigium*, is gold embroidery. It appears, however, from a passage in Maundevile to have meant a border of embroidery. "And all tho robes ben orfrayed *alle abouten*.—The second thousand is all clothed in clothes diapered of red silk, all wrought with gold, and the *orfrayes* set full of great pearl," &c. 8vo. edit. p. 279. The meaning of the word *mound* is not easy to ascertain: does it relate to *raised*, or *embossed* work? or does it mean embroidery of *pure* gold, from the French word *monder*?



Forth she fared mid her rout ;  
 A thousand ladies of rich *soute*<sup>1</sup>.  
 A sparrow-hawk that was *honèst*  
 So sat on the lady's fist.  
 Four trumps toforne her blew ;  
 Many men that day her knew :  
 An hundred thousand, and eke mo,  
 All *alouten* her unto.  
 All the town be-hanged was,  
 Against the lady Olympias.  
*Orgues, chymbes*, each manner *glee*<sup>2</sup>,  
 Was *drynan*<sup>3</sup>, *ayein*<sup>4</sup> that lady free.  
 Withouten the townes *murèy*<sup>5</sup>  
 Was *mered*<sup>6</sup> each manner play.  
 There was knights tournaying,  
 There was maidens caroling.  
 There was champions *skirming*<sup>7</sup>,  
 . . . . . also wrestling.  
 Of lions' chace, of bear-baiting,  
 A bay of boar, of bull slaying.  
 All the city was *be-hong*  
 With rich *samytes*<sup>8</sup> and *pelles*<sup>9</sup> long.

<sup>1</sup> Suit, apparel.

<sup>2</sup> Organs, cymbals, and all sorts of music.

<sup>3</sup> Ringing? *drignon*, Old Fr., is a chime of bells. Vide La Combe, Dict. du Vieux Lang.

<sup>4</sup> Against ; in the presence of.

Walls. Fr.

<sup>6</sup> Probably seen, gazed at ; *miré*. Fr.

<sup>7</sup> Skirmishing.

<sup>8</sup> Satins. Fr.

<sup>9</sup> Palls, or perhaps furs ; *pelisses*. Fr.

Dame Olympias among this press  
Single rode, all mantle-less.

\*            \*            \*            \*

Her yellow hair was fair-attired,  
Mid riche stringes of golde wired ;  
It *helyd*<sup>1</sup> her abouten all  
To her gentile middle small :  
Bright and shene was her face ;  
Every fair-head in her was.

The following is part of a description of a battle :

Alexander made a cry hardy,  
“ Ore tost, *aby*, *aby*<sup>2</sup> ! ”  
Then the knights of Achayè  
Justed with *hem* of Arabyè :  
\*            \*            \*            \*  
Egypt justed with *hem* of Tyre ;  
Simple knight with riche sire ;  
There n'as *foregift* ne *fórberyng*  
Between *vavasoure*<sup>3</sup> ne king.  
*Tofore*<sup>4</sup> men mighten and behind  
*Cuntek*<sup>5</sup> seek, and *cuntek* find.  
With Persians foughten the *Gregeys*<sup>6</sup> :  
There rose cry, and great *honteys*<sup>7</sup> !  
\*            \*            \*            \*

<sup>1</sup> Hid. *Halan*. Sax.

<sup>2</sup> Perhaps the same as *abois* ; the cry when the stag is taken.

<sup>3</sup> Servant.

<sup>4</sup> Before.

<sup>5</sup> Contest.

<sup>6</sup> Greeks ; *Gregeois*. Fr.

<sup>7</sup> Shame. Fr.

There might knight find his peer ;  
 There *les*<sup>1</sup> many his *destrere*<sup>2</sup>.  
 There was quick in little *thrawe*<sup>3</sup>  
 Many gentil knight y-slawe.  
 Many arme, many *heved*<sup>4</sup>  
 Sone from the body reaved.  
 Many gentle *lavedy*  
 There *lese* quick her *amȳ*,  
 There was many *maym*<sup>5</sup> y-led,  
 Many fair *pensel*<sup>6</sup> be-bled ;  
 There was swerdes *liklakȳng*<sup>7</sup>,  
 There was speres *bathing*<sup>8</sup>,  
 Both kings there sans doute  
*Beeth* in dash'd with all *her* route.

\*       \*       \*       \*

Many landes near and far  
*Lesen* her lord in that war.  
 The earth quaked of *her* riding :  
 The weather thicked of *her* crying :  
 The blood of *hem* that weren *y-slawe*  
 Ran by floodes to the *lowe*<sup>9</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> Lost. Sax.

<sup>2</sup> War-horse. Fr. ; so called from its being led on the *right hand*.

<sup>3</sup> Time.      <sup>4</sup> Head.      <sup>5</sup> Maimed.      <sup>6</sup> Standard. Fr.

<sup>7</sup> Clashing. An unusual word, like *cliquetis*, Fr. from which it is, perhaps, derived.

<sup>8</sup> Perhaps here is an omission by the transcriber, and the line should run thus : "There was spears *in blood bathing*," otherwise we do not know what the kings and their route *dashed into*.

<sup>9</sup> Low, *i. e.* to the low grounds.

The procession of Olympias, described in the first of these specimens, is given by Gower (*Conf. Am.* fol. 137, edit. 1532), but is by no means equal in spirit, or elegance, to the picture drawn by Adam Davie: and we probably should search in vain among our poets anterior to Chaucer for lines so full of animation as the four last in the preceding extract. The language, as far as we can judge from the specimens selected by Mr. Warton, is exactly such as we should expect, and marks that popularity which French phrases were beginning to acquire, and which continued to increase during the whole of the following reign. Upon the whole, it is certainly to be wished that some editor may be found, who shall have the courage to decipher the obsolete manuscript of Adam Davie's romance of Alexander, and give it entire to the public.

A poet named **ROBERT BASTON**, a Carmelite friar of Scarborough, is mentioned as attending Edward II. to the siege of Stirling castle. He was taken prisoner by the Scots, and compelled, for his ransom, to write a panegyric on Robert Bruce. This was probably in English; and he is described by Bale as the author of "*Poemata et Rhythmi*, lib. i.," and "*Tragœdiæ Vulgares*, lib. i.;" but his only poem now extant, viz., "*An Account of the Siege of Stirling Castle*," is written in Latin monkish hexameters. It is not easy to understand what Bale meant by "*tragœdiæ*," which word does not always imply scenic representations. It appears, indeed, that before the reign of Edward II. many scriptural histories in dialogue were exhibited in our churches under the name of mysteries or miracles, but these dialogues were not poems; on the other hand, many poems were written about this period under the name of tragedies and comedies, but these poems were not in dialogue.

## CHAPTER VI.

*Reign of Edward III. (1327 to 1377.)*

THE HERMIT OF HAMPOLE.—LAURENCE MINOT.—PIERCE  
 PLOUGHMAN'S VISION.—SPECIMEN OF THE VISION.—  
 PIERCE THE PLOUGHMAN'S CREED.—SPECIMEN.

THE first English poet that occurs in the reign of Edward III. is RICHARD ROLLE, hermit of the order of St. Augustine, and doctor of divinity, who lived a life of solitude near the nunnery of Hampole, four miles from Doncaster, in Yorkshire. He was a very popular and learned though inelegant writer in Latin on theological subjects; and his pretensions to the character of an English poet are founded on a *metrical Paraphrase of the Book of Job, of the Lord's Prayer, of the seven Penitential Psalms*, and THE PRICKE OF CONSCIENCE, all of which are in MS. and usually attributed to him. This latter piece is divided into seven parts: I. Of Man's Nature. II. Of the World. III. Of Death. IV. Of Purgatory. V. Of the Day of Judgment. VI. Of the Torments of Hell. VII. Of the Joys of Heaven. Mr. Warton, however, suspects that they were all *translated* by contemporary poets from the *Latin prose* original composed by him; and he has proved by a long extract that they are not worth transcribing<sup>1</sup>. *The Hermit of Hampole* died in 1349.

The next poet in succession is LAURENCE MINOT,

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Ritson, notwithstanding, in his "Bibliographia Poetica," (where he enumerates no less than seventeen pieces attributed to our author,) asserts Hampole's claims upon the express authority of Lydgate.

whose name was unknown to our antiquaries, till Mr. Tyrwhitt, in searching after the manuscript of Chaucer, accidentally discovered a copy of his works, consisting of a collection of poems upon the events of the former part of this reign. It is sufficient in this place to have mentioned his name, as a very elegant edition of his works, accompanied with all the illustrations that could be drawn from contemporary history, has within these very few years been published by Mr. Ritson.

Laurence Minot appears to have flourished about the year 1350, a few years after which was written the very curious poem called *THE VISION OF PIERCE PLOWMAN*. Its reputed author is ROBERT LANGLAND, a secular priest, born at Mortimer's Cleobury, in Shropshire, and fellow of Oriel College, Oxford<sup>1</sup>. His work is divided into twenty distinct *passus*, or breaks, forming a series of visions, which he supposes to have appeared to him while he was asleep after a fatiguing walk amongst the Malvern Hills in Worcestershire.

A dream is certainly the best excuse that can be offered for the introduction of allegorical personages, and for any incoherences that may result from the conduct of a dialogue carried on between such fanciful actors: and it must be confessed that this writer has taken every advantage of a plan so comprehensive and convenient, and has dramatized his subject with great ingenuity. His work may be considered as a long moral and religious discourse, and, as such, is full of good sense and piety; but it is farther rendered interesting by a succession of incidents, enlivened sometimes by strong satire, and sometimes by the keenest ridicule on the vices

<sup>1</sup> That Robert Langland was the author of this work seems to have been solely admitted on the authority of Crowley, its earliest editor. The only remaining evidence on the subject appears to indicate that the writer's name was *William*: but a discussion which can only end in uncertainty is not worth undertaking.

of all orders of men, and particularly of the religious. It is ornamented also by many fine specimens of descriptive poetry, in which the genius of the author appears to great advantage.

But his most striking peculiarity is the structure of his versification, which is the subject of a very learned and ingenious essay in the second volume of the "Reliques of Ancient English Poetry." His verses are not distinguished from prose either by a determinate number of syllables, or by rhyme, or indeed by any other apparent test, except the studied recurrence of the same letter three times in each line; a contrivance which we should not suspect of producing much harmony, but to which (as Crowley, the original editor of the poem, justly observes) even a modern ear will gradually become accustomed. This measure is referred by Dr. Percy to one of the one hundred and thirty-six different kinds of metre which Wormius has discovered amongst the works of the Islandic poets; but the principal difficulty is to account for its adoption in *Pierce Ploughman's Vision*.

Perhaps this alliterative metre, having become a favourite with the northern Scalds during the interval which elapsed between the departure of the Anglo-Saxons from Scandinavia and the subsequent migration of the Danes, may have been introduced by the latter into those provinces of England where they established themselves; and being adopted by the numerous body of minstrels, for which those provinces were always distinguished, may have maintained a successful struggle against the Norman ornament of rhyme, which was universally cultivated by the poets of the south. This at least seems to be suggested by Mr. Tyrwhitt, who observes that Giraldus Cambrensis describes by the name of *annomination* what we now call *alliteration*, and informs us that it was highly fashionable amongst the English, and even the Welsh poets of his time. That it effectually stood its ground in some

parts of the kingdom during the reign of Edward III. and long afterwards, appears from the numerous imitations of Langland's style which are still preserved; and it is evident that a sensible and zealous writer in the cause of religion and morality was not likely to sacrifice those great objects, together with his own reputation, to the capricious wish of inventing a new, or of giving currency to an obsolete mode of versification.

Mr. Warton is of opinion, that "this imposed constraint of seeking identical initials, and the affectation of obsolete English, by demanding a constant and necessary departure from the natural and obvious forms of expression, while it circumscribed the powers of our author's genius, contributed also to render his manner extremely perplexed, and to disgust the reader with obscurities." But it may be doubted whether a work apparently addressed to the plain sense of common readers was written with an affectation of obsolete English; and much of its obscurity may perhaps be ascribed to the negligence of the transcriber of the MS. from which the printed copy is taken. Neither is it certain that the "imposed constraint of seeking identical *initials*" is at all more embarrassing to those whose ear is accustomed to such a scheme of poetry, than the imposed constraint of identical *final sounds*; a constraint which, by exacting from the author greater attention to the mode of expressing his thoughts, is rather likely to increase than to diminish the precision and clearness of his language.

The following extract will give a good general idea of this author's manner, because it contains some of those practical and simple precepts in which he so much abounds, and a little accidental ridicule of physicians, together with a very curious picture of the domestic economy of the poor of this country in the middle of the fourteenth century. It is a scene in which Pierce Ploughman, the favourite character of the piece, addresses him-



self to Hunger, and (to use the expressions in the margin of the original) "prayeth Hunger to teach him a *leechcraft* for him and for his servant."

I wot well, quoth Hunger, what sickness you aileth :  
Ye have *manged*<sup>1</sup> over much ; and that maketh you  
groan.

And I *hote*<sup>2</sup> thee, quoth Hunger, as thou thy *heal*<sup>3</sup>  
willest,

That thou drink no day ere thou dine somewhat :  
Eat not, I hote thee, ere Hunger thee take  
And send thee of his sauce to saviour with thy lips :  
And keep some 'till supper-time, and sit not too  
long,

And rise up ere appetite have eaten his fill.

Let not Sir Surfeit sit on thy board :

*Leve*<sup>4</sup> him not, for he is lecherous and licorous of  
tongue,

And after many manner of meat his maw is a-  
hunger'd.

And if thou diet thee thus, I dare lay my ears  
That Physic shall his furred hood for his food sell,  
And his cloak of *Calabrye*<sup>5</sup>, with all his *knaps*<sup>6</sup> of  
gold,

<sup>1</sup> Eaten. Fr.

<sup>2</sup> Advise, exhort.

<sup>3</sup> Health.

<sup>4</sup> Believe. Sax.

<sup>5</sup> The physicians of the middle ages were principally Jews, who learnt their art from the Arabians. A considerable colony of this people was established in the kingdom of Naples. The medical school of Salerno is well known.

<sup>6</sup> Buttons. Sax. ; literally knobs.

And be fain, by my faith, his physic to let <sup>1</sup>  
 And learn to labour with hand; *live-lode* <sup>2</sup> is sweet.  
 For murderers are many leeches: Lord *hem* amend!  
 They do men die by their drinks, ere destiny it  
 would.

By St. Paul, (quod Pierce) these are profitable  
 words!  
 Wend thee, Hunger, when thou wilt, yet well be  
 thou ever!  
 For this is a lovely lesson, Lord it thee for-yeild!

*Bihote* <sup>3</sup> God! (quod Hunger) hence ne will I  
 wend  
 Till I have dined by this day, and drunken both.

I have no penny, (quod Pierce) pullets for to buy,  
 Ne neither goose, ne *grys* <sup>4</sup>; but two green cheeses,  
 A few curds, and cream, and an *haver-cake* <sup>5</sup>  
 And two loaves of beans and bran, bake for my folk.  
 And *yet* <sup>6</sup>, I say by my soul, I have no salt bacon,  
 Ne no *cokeney* <sup>7</sup>, by Christ! collops for to make.  
 And I have parsley, and *porets* <sup>8</sup>, and many cole-  
 plants,

<sup>1</sup> To leave.

<sup>2</sup> If God permit?

<sup>3</sup> Oat-cake.

<sup>4</sup> Leeks, Fr.

<sup>5</sup> Life-leading; we now say *livelihood*.

<sup>6</sup> *Gryce*, pig. Bannatyne Gloss.

<sup>7</sup> Still farther.

<sup>8</sup> Cook.

And eke a cow and a calf, and a cart-mare  
To draw a-field my dung the while the drought  
lasteth ;

And by this *live-lod* I must live 'till Lammas time.  
By that, I hope to have harvest in my croft ;  
And then I may *dight*<sup>1</sup> my dinner as my dear liketh.

And all the poor people *tho* peas-cods fet ;  
Beans and baken apples they brought in *her* laps,  
*Chyboles*<sup>2</sup>, and chervil, and ripe cherries many,  
And proffer'd Pierce this present to please with  
Hunger.

(“ Poor folk feed Hunger ”—*marginal note.*)

All Hunger ate in haste, and asked after more.  
Then poor folk, for fear, fed Hunger *yern*<sup>3</sup>  
With green poret, and peasen ; to poison him they  
thought.

By that it nighed to harvest ; new corn came *to-  
cheaping*<sup>4</sup>.  
Then was folk *fain*<sup>5</sup>, and fed Hunger with the best,  
With good ale, as Glutton taught, and *gart*<sup>6</sup> Hunger  
asleep.

<sup>1</sup> “ *Dress* my dinner as *me* pleaseth.”

<sup>2</sup> *Ciboule*, Fr. ; *cipolla*, Ital. a species of onion.

<sup>3</sup> Eagerly. Sax.

<sup>4</sup> Cheap.

<sup>5</sup> Glad. Sax

<sup>6</sup> *Made*. Sax.

And *tho* would Waster no work, but wandren  
about;

Ne no beggar eat bread that beans in were,  
But of *coket*<sup>1</sup> and *clermatyne*<sup>2</sup>, or else of clean wheat;  
Ne no half-penny ale in no wise drink,  
But of the best and of the brownest that in *burth*<sup>3</sup> is  
to sell.

Labourers that have no land to live on but *her*  
hands

Deigned not to dine a day *night*<sup>4</sup> old *wortes*<sup>5</sup>:  
May no penny-ale *hem* pay, nor no piece of bacon;  
But if it be fresh flesh, *other* fish fried either or bake,  
And that *chaud* or *plus chaud*, for chilling of *her*  
maw, &c.

[Crowley's first edition, fol. 35, pass. vi.]

The following passage has the marginal admonition,  
"Read this:" indeed the prediction with which it con-  
cludes is very curious.

And now is Religion a rider, a roamer by street,  
A leader of *lovedays*<sup>6</sup>, and a loud beggar,

<sup>1</sup> A particular sort of bread.

<sup>2</sup> Perhaps another sort of bread used at breakfast.

<sup>3</sup> Booth? or borough?

<sup>4</sup> In some editions the word *not* is omitted, which will only increase the perplexity. The meaning, as the line stands here (from ed. i. 1550), seems to be, that labourers, &c. refused their usual dinner (or rather supper) of old worts or cabbage; this, however, is strangely expressed.

<sup>5</sup> Cabbage.

<sup>6</sup> *Loveday* (says Tyrwhitt, note on v. 260, Cant. Tales) is a day appointed for the amicable settlement of differences.

A pricker of a palfrey from manor to manor.  
 An heap of hounds at his —— as he a lord were :  
 And but if his *knave*<sup>1</sup> kneel that shall his cope bring,  
 He loured on him, and asked, who taught him  
 courtesy?

Little had lords to done to give lands from *her* heirs  
 To Religious, that have no ruth if it rain on *her*  
 altars.

In many places there the parsons be by *herself* at  
 ease ;

Of the poor have they no pity : and that is *her*  
 charity !

And they letten *hem* as lords, *her* lands lie so broad.

AND THERE SHALL COME A KING and confess you,  
 Religious,

And beat you, as the bible telleth, for breaking of  
 your rule,

And amend *monials*<sup>2</sup>, monks, and canons,

And put *hem* to *her* penance—

\* \* \* \*

And then shall the Abbot of Abingdon, and all his  
 issue for ever

HAVE A KNOCK OF A KING, AND INCURABLE THE  
 WOUND.

[Fol. 50, pass. x.]

The limits of the present publication will not admit of  
 many extracts from this curious work, but the following

<sup>1</sup> A male servant.

<sup>2</sup> Nuns.

description, in which Nature or Kind is represented as sending forth diseases from the planets, at the command of Conscience, and of his attendants, Age and Death, is too striking to be omitted ; particularly since it appears to have suggested to Milton his sublime description of the lazar-house (*Paradise Lost*, b. xi. l. 477). This coincidence is remarked by Mrs. Cooper in her "Muses' Library."

Kind<sup>1</sup> Conscience *tho* heard, and came out of the  
planets,

And sent forth his *forriours*<sup>2</sup>, fevers, and fluxes,  
Coughs, and *cardiacles*<sup>3</sup>, cramps, and tooth-aches,

\* \* \* \*

Boils, and botches, and burning agues,  
Phrenesis, and foul evil, foragers of Kind !

\* \* \* \*

There was "Harrow ! and help ! here cometh Kind  
With Death that is dreadful to undone us all !"

\* \* \* \*

Age the hoar, he was in the va-ward,  
And bare the banner before Death ; by right he it  
claimed.

Kind came after, with many keen sores,  
As pox and pestilences, and much people shent.  
So Kind, through corruptions, killed full many.  
Death came driving after, and to dust pashed  
Kings and kaysers, knights and popes.

\* \* \* \*

<sup>1</sup> Nature.

<sup>2</sup> Foragers. Fr.

<sup>3</sup> *Cardialgia*, heart-ache. Gr.

Many a lovely lady and lemans of knights  
Swoonden and swelten for sorrow of Death's dints, &c.  
[Fol. 112, pass. xxi.]

The editions of *Pierce Ploughman* that usually occur are those of Crowley, of which, as Dr. Percy informs us, there were three published in the same year, 1550. There is also an edition, printed in 1561, by Owen Rogers, to which is sometimes annexed a poem of nearly the same tendency, and written in the same metre, called *PIERCE THE PLOUGHMAN'S CREED*<sup>1</sup>. It was evidently composed after the death of Wickliffe, which happened in 1384, and is therefore more modern than many of the poems of Chaucer, but is noticed here on account of its style and subject.

Mr. Warton says, that in a copy of the Creed presented to him by the Bishop of Gloucester, and once belonging to Mr. Pope, the latter, in his own hand, has inserted the following abstract of its plan.

"An ignorant plain man having learned his *Paternoster* and *Ave-mary*, wants to learn his Creed. He asks several religious men of the several orders to teach it him. First of a friar Minor, who bids him beware of the Carmelites, and assures him they can teach him nothing, describing their faults, &c. But that the friars Minor shall save him, whether he learns his Creed or not. He goes next to the friars Preachers, whose magnificent monastery he describes: there he meets a fat friar, who declaims against the Augustines. He is shocked at his pride, and goes to the Augustines. They rail at the Minorites. He goes to the Carmes; they abuse the Dominicans, but promise him salvation, without the creed, for money. He leaves them with indignation, and finds

<sup>1</sup> The first ed. of *P. the P.'s Creed* was printed by R. Wolfe, in 1553.

an honest poor **FLOWMAN** in the field, and tells him how he was disappointed by the four orders. The plowman answers with a long invective against them."

For the full explanation of this poem it is essential to premise that, in consequence of the many abuses which had gradually perverted the monastic institutions, it became necessary, about the beginning of the thirteenth century, to establish a new class of friars, who, possessing no regular revenues, and relying for a subsistence on the general reverence which they should attract by superior talent, or severer sanctity of manners, should become the effectual and permanent support of the papal authority against those heresies which were beginning to infect the church, as well as against the jealousy of the civil power. The new institution consisted of four mendicant orders: the Franciscans, who were also called friars-minors, or minorites, or grey-friars; the Augustine, or Austin-friars; the Dominicans, or friars-preachers, or black-friars; and the Carmelites, or white-friars.

For the purpose of quickening their zeal, the popes bestowed on them many new and uncommon privileges; the right of travelling where they pleased, of conversing with persons of all descriptions, of instructing youth, and of hearing confessions, and bestowing absolution without reserve: and as these advantages naturally attracted to the privileged orders all the novices who were distinguished by zeal or talent, excited their emulation, and ensured the respect of the people, they quickly eclipsed all their rivals, and realized the most sanguine hopes that had been entertained from their establishment.

The mendicant orders of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, but particularly the Dominicans, very nearly resembled the Jesuits of modern times. In these orders were found the most learned men and the most popular preachers of the age. The almost exclusive charge of the national education enabled them to direct the public taste



and opinions ; the confessional chair placed the consciences of their penitents at their disposal ; and their leading members, having discovered that an association in which individual talents are systematically directed to some general purpose is nearly irresistible, soon insinuated themselves into the most important offices of church and state, and guided at their will the religion and politics of Europe. But prosperity, as usual, made them indolent and imprudent. They had long been envied and hated, and the progress of general civilization raised up numberless rivals, possessing equal learning, ambition, and versatility of manners, with superior activity and caution. They quarrelled among themselves, and thus lost the favour and reverence of the people ; and they were at last gradually sinking into insignificance, when they were swallowed up in the general wreck of monastic institutions.

The magnificence of their edifices, which excited universal envy, was the frequent topic of Wickliffe's invective ; and this poet, who was apparently much attached to the opinions of that reformer, has given us the following elaborate description of a Dominican convent :

Then thought I to *frayne*<sup>1</sup> the first of these four  
orders ;  
And pressed to the preachers, to proven *her* will.  
*Ich* hied to *her* house, to hearken of more,  
And when I came to that court, I gaped about,  
Such a build bold y-built upon earth height  
Saw I not, in certain, sith a long time.  
I *seemed*<sup>2</sup> upon that house, and *yern*<sup>3</sup> thereon looked,

<sup>1</sup> To ask. Sax.

<sup>2</sup> Gazed.

<sup>3</sup> Eagerly. Sax.

How the pillars weren y-paint, and *pulched*<sup>1</sup> full  
 clean,  
 And quaintly y-carven with curious knots,  
 With windows well y-wrought, wide up aloft ;  
 And then I entered in, and even forth went.  
 And all was walled that *wone*<sup>2</sup>, though it wide were,  
 With posterns, in privy to passen when *hem* list.  
 Orchards and *erberes*<sup>3</sup>, *evesed*<sup>4</sup> well clean,  
 And a curious cross craftily *entailed*<sup>5</sup>,  
 With tabernacles *y-tight*<sup>6</sup> to *toten*<sup>7</sup> all abouten.  
 The price of a plough-land, of pennies so round,  
 To apparel that pillar were pure little.

Then I *munte me*<sup>8</sup> forth the minster to knowen,  
 And *awaited*<sup>9</sup> *woon*<sup>10</sup> wonderly well y-built.  
 With arches on every *half*<sup>11</sup>, and *bellech*<sup>12</sup> y-carven,  
 With crotchets on corners, with knots of gold.  
 Wide windows y-wrought, y-written full thick,  
 Shining *with shapen shields*, to shewen about,  
 With *marks* of merchants *y-meddled*<sup>13</sup> between,

<sup>1</sup> Polished.<sup>2</sup> Habitation. Sax.<sup>3</sup> Arbours.<sup>4</sup> Turfed? from *waions* (i. e. *gazons*), old Fr. ? or is it *trimmed* from *efecian*, *tondere*. Sax. ?<sup>5</sup> Carved. Fr.<sup>6</sup> Probably for *y-dight*.<sup>7</sup> Look.<sup>8</sup> Mounted ?<sup>9</sup> Watched, observed. Fr.<sup>10</sup> One ? or *wone*, a habitation ?<sup>11</sup> Part.<sup>12</sup> Beautifully. Fr.<sup>13</sup> Y-meddled is *mixed* ; the *marks* of merchants are put in opposition to the *shapen shields*, because merchants had no coats of arms.

*Mo* than twenty and two, twice y-numbered ;  
 There is none herald that hath half *swich* a roll.  
 Right as a *rageman*<sup>1</sup> hath reckon'd *hem* new ;  
 Tombs upon tabernacles, *tyled upon lofte*<sup>2</sup> ,  
 Housed in *hornes*<sup>3</sup> hard set abouten,  
 Of armed alabaster clad for the nonce,  
 Made upon marble in many manner wise.  
 Knights in their *conisante*<sup>4</sup> clad for the nonce :  
 All, it seem'd, saints ; y-sacred upon earth ;  
 And lovely ladies y-wrought, layen by *her* sides,  
 In many gay garments that weren gold-beaten.  
 Though the tax of ten year were truly gathered,  
 N'old it nought maken that house half as I trow.

Then came I to that cloister, and gaped abouten,  
 How it was pillar'd, and paint, and pourtray'd well  
                     clean,  
 All *y-heled*<sup>5</sup> with lead, low to the stones,  
 And y-paved with *poyntil*<sup>6</sup>, each point after other,  
 With conduits of clean tin, closed all about  
 With lavers of *latten*<sup>7</sup> lovely *y-greithed*<sup>8</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> This word sometimes means simply an *account* ; but it here seems to allude to the famous *Ragman's* roll, and to be put as an antithesis to the herald's roll.

<sup>2</sup> Raised aloft.

<sup>3</sup> Mr. Warton supposes that *horns* may mean *irons*, *i. e.* iron rails ; or that, perhaps, we ought to read *hurnes*, which means corners, niches, arches. But why not *harnés*, *harness*, *i. e.* armour ?

<sup>4</sup> Cognisances, devices.

<sup>5</sup> Hid, covered. Sax.

<sup>6</sup> Probably lozenge-shaped stones ; pantiles.

<sup>7</sup> A sort of brass. Fr.

<sup>8</sup> Prepared, adorned.

I trow, the gainage of the ground in a great shire  
N'old apparel that place, *oo point till other end*<sup>1</sup>.

Then was the chapter-house wrought as a great  
church,  
Carven, and cover'd, and quaintly entailed,  
With seemly cielure y-set *on loft*,  
As a parliament-house y-painted about.

Then fared I into *fraytour*<sup>2</sup>, and found there  
another ;  
An hall for an high king, an house-hold to holden ;  
With broad boards abouten, y-benched well clean ;  
With windows of glass wrought as a church.  
Then walked I *farrer*, and went all abouten,  
And saw halls full high, and houses full noble,  
Chambers with chimneys, and chapels gay,  
And kitchens for an high king in castles to holden.  
And her *dortour*<sup>3</sup> y-dight with doors full strong,  
*Fermerye*<sup>4</sup> and *fraytour*, with *fele*<sup>5</sup> mo houses.  
And all strong stone wall, *stern*<sup>6</sup> upon height,  
With gay garrets, and great, and each hole y-glazed.  
And other houses enow to harbour the queen.  
And yet these builders will beggen a bag full of  
wheat

<sup>1</sup> From one end to the other.

<sup>2</sup> Fraternity, or common-hall.

<sup>4</sup> Infirmary.

<sup>6</sup> Strewn, built.

<sup>3</sup> Dormitory. Fr.

<sup>5</sup> Many. Sax.

Of a pure poor man, that may *unneth*<sup>1</sup> pay  
Half his rent in a year, and half been behind.

[Rogers's ed. sign. A 4, &c.]

Mr. Warton has transcribed a very large portion of this curious poem, which, as he justly observes, is nearly as rare as a manuscript; but the printed copies, like those of Pierce Ploughman's Vision, seem to be full of typographical errors; and an editor who should from a collation of MSS. reprint a correct edition of these two forgotten poems, would make a valuable addition to our stock of early literature<sup>2</sup>.

Langland's work, whatever may be thought of its poetical merit, cannot fail of being considered as an entertaining and useful commentary on the general histories of the fourteenth century, not only from its almost innumerable pictures of contemporary manners, but also from its connexion with the particular feelings and opinions of the time. The reader will recollect that the minds of men were greatly incensed by the glaring contradictions that appeared between the professions and actions of the two great orders of the state.

The clergy of a religion founded on humility and self-denial united the most shameless profligacy of manners with the most inordinate magnificence. An armed aristocracy, who by their oath of knighthood were bound to the maintenance of order, and to the protection of the helpless and unfortunate, were not satisfied with exercis-

<sup>1</sup> Scarcely.

<sup>2</sup> No one is more competent to supply this desideratum than Mr. Ritson (vide his *Bibliographia Poetica*, pp. 29 and 404, for some very valuable information with respect to the MSS. of P. P.'s Vision); and it is much to be wished that he could be prevailed upon to add this to the many obligations he has already conferred on the lovers of ancient English poetry.

ing in their own persons the most intolerable oppression on their vassals, but were the avowed protectors of the subordinate robbers and assassins who infested the roads, and almost annihilated the internal intercourse of every country in Europe. The people were driven to despair, flew to arms, and took a most frightful revenge on their oppressors. Various insurrections in Flanders, those of the Jacquerie in France, and those of Wat Tyler and others in England, were the immediate consequences of this despair; but the popular discontents had been in a great degree prepared and fomented by a set of itinerant preachers, who inveighed against the luxury and crimes of the great, and maintained the inalienable rights and natural equality of man.

Langland's poem, addressed to popular readers, written in simple but energetic language, and admirably adapted, by its dramatic form, and by the employment of allegorical personages, to suit the popular taste, though it is free from these extravagant doctrines, breathes only the pure spirit of the Christian religion, and inculcates the principles of rational liberty. This may possibly have prepared the minds of men for those bolder tenets which, for a series of years, were productive only of national restlessness and misery, but which ultimately terminated in a free government and a reformed religion.

The reader who may be desirous of seeing farther specimens of alliterative versification, will find in Mr. Warton's history some extracts from a *Poem on Alexander*, written perhaps by a contemporary of Langland, and a *Hymn to the Virgin*, of much earlier date, neither of which are mentioned in Dr. Percy's Essay.

## CHAPTER VII.

*Reign of Edward III. continued (1327 to 1377).*

JOHN GOWER—SPECIMENS OF HIS POETRY.

THE next place in our poetical history is usually assigned to JOHN GOWER, who is supposed to have been born before Chaucer, although he survived him by two years, and died in 1402. We do not possess any materials for the history of his life; but it is probable that he was well born<sup>1</sup>; and we have an indirect proof of his wealth as well as of his munificence, because we know that he contributed largely to rebuild, in its present elegant form, the conventual church of St. Mary Overee in Southwark, where his very curious tomb still remains.

It is probable that Gower's earliest compositions were his French ballads, of which fifty are still preserved in a

<sup>1</sup> There is a remarkable passage in Sir John Fortescue's treatise "de Laudibus Legum Angliæ," which tends to confirm the popular opinion, that Gower, Chaucer, and Occleve, all of whom received their education at the Inns of Court, were of noble origin. It is in the 49th chapter, where, after enumerating the necessary expenses incurred by the students at those seminaries, he says, "*Quo fit, ut vix doctus in legibus illis reperiatur in regno qui non sit nobilis et [aut?] de nobilium genere egressus.*" In his revera hospitium, ultra studium legum, est quasi gymnasium omnium morum qui nobiles decent. Ibi cantare ipsi addiscunt, similiter et se exercent in omni genere harmoniæ; ibi etiam tripudiare, ac jocos singulos nobilibus convenientes, qualiter in domo regiæ exercere solent, enutriti. Ita ut milites, barones, alii quoque magnates et nobiles regni, in hospitium illis ponunt filios suos," &c.

folio MS. formerly belonging to Fairfax, Cromwell's general, and now to be found in the library of the Marquis of Stafford, by whom they were communicated to Mr. Warton. These juvenile productions are more poetical and more elegant than any of his subsequent compositions in his native language : perhaps they would not suffer by a comparison with the best contemporary sonnets written by professed French poets : at all events they show extraordinary proficiency in a foreigner ; for which reason, and because they may be useful for the purpose of comparing the state of the two languages at this period, it is hoped that the reader will forgive the insertion of the following short specimen. It is a sonnet on the month of May.

Pour comparer ce joli tempts de Mai,  
 Je [le] dirai semblable à Paradis ;  
 Car lors chantoit et merle et pepegai ;  
 Les champs sont verds, les herbes sont fleurils ;  
 Lors est Nature dame du pais ;  
 Dont Venus point l'amant à tel essai  
*Qu'encontre amour n'est qui peut dire nai.*

[The second stanza, being scarcely intelligible from the mistakes of the transcriber, is omitted.]

En lieu de rose ortie cuellerai,  
 Dont mes chapels ferai, par tel devis,  
 Que toute joie et confort je lairrai,  
 Si celle seule en qui j'ai mon cœur mis,  
 Selon le point que j'ai souvent requis  
 Ne daigne alléger les griefs mals que j'ai,  
*Qu'encontre amour n'est qui peut dire nai.*



Pour pitié querre, et pourchasser *intris* <sup>1</sup>  
 Va-t'en, balade, où je t'envoyrai,  
 Qu'ores en certain je l'ai très bien appris  
*Qu'encontre amour n'est qui peut dire nai.*

But the three principal works of our author are the *SPECULUM MEDITANTIS*, the *VOX CLAMANTIS*, and the *CONFESSIO AMANTIS*, which are represented by the three volumes on his tomb. The first of these is in French verse : this was never printed<sup>2</sup>. The *VOX CLAMANTIS*

<sup>1</sup> Entrée, i. e. admission to the presence of his mistress.

<sup>2</sup> Gower's *Speculum Meditantis* has never, I believe, been seen by any of our poetical antiquaries ; nor does it exist in the Bodleian library. Campbell, the author of Gower's article in the *Biographia Br.*, and Warton, who profess to give an account of its contents, were deceived by the ambiguity of a reference in Tanner, and, instead of the work in question, describe a much shorter poem, or *balade*, by the same author. At the end of three very ancient and valuable Bodleian MSS. of the *Confessio Amantis* is subjoined a notice (in the Latin of those days) of Gower's three principal works, possibly written by himself, from which, as it has never (to the best of my knowledge) been hitherto published, as much as relates to the *Speculum* is here given for the satisfaction of the curious reader.

These MSS. may be found in the general Cat. for Engl. and Irel. (Oxf. 1697, folio) by the following references :—

I. Bodl. 3883. Fairfax, MS. 3. [Given by Thos. Lord Fairfax, Cromwell's general. Vide Warton, Emend. and Add. to vol. ii., sign. g. note b.]

II. Bodl. 2449. Fletewood, NE. F. 8, 9.

III. Bodl. 2875. [Given by Dr. John King, Dean of Ch. Ch.] This, notwithstanding the catalogue, contains *only* the *Confessio Amantis*. A more modern MS. of the Conf. Am., apparently a transcript of this, with the same Latin memorandum of Gower's works, may be seen in the Cat. N. 3357.

As the three copies vary in the language (though much less in the account of the French than of the Latin and English poem), the

consists of seven books of Latin elegiacs, written with some degree of purity, and a tolerable attention to the prosody: it is little more than a metrical chronicle of the insurrection of the Commons, in the reign of Richard II. This, also, exists only in manuscript. The *CONFESSIO AMANTIS*, which was printed by Caxton, in 1483, and afterwards by Berthelette, in 1582, and 1554, folio, appears to have been composed at the command of Richard II., who having met our poet rowing on the Thames near London, invited him into the royal barge, and, after much conversation, requested him to "*book some new thing.*"

text of MS. Fairf. is first given, and then the different readings, futile as they may be, from MS. Fletew. and King.

Quia unusquisque prout a Deo accepit aliis impertiri tenetur, Johannes Gower, super his quæ Deus sibi *sensualiter*<sup>1</sup> donavit villi-  
cationis suæ rationem, *dum tempus instat*<sup>2</sup>, secundum aliquid alle-  
viare cupiens, inter labores et otia ad aliorum notitiam tres<sup>3</sup> libros<sup>4</sup>  
doctrinæ causâ *formâ subsequenti propterea composuit*<sup>5</sup>.

Primus liber, Gallico sermone editus, in decem dividitur partes,  
et tractans de vitis et virtutibus, *necnon et de variis hujus sæculi*  
*gradibus*<sup>6</sup>, *viam*<sup>7</sup> quâ peccator *transgressus ad sui Creatoris agni-*  
*tionem redire debet recto tremite docere conatur*<sup>8</sup>. Titulusque libelli  
istius Speculum Meditantis<sup>9</sup> nuncupatus est.

<sup>1</sup> *Intellectualiter*. King.

<sup>2</sup> These three words wanting in Fletew.

<sup>3</sup> Tres *præcipue* libros. Fletew.

<sup>4</sup> *Per ipsum dum vixit* doct. Fletew.

<sup>5</sup> Instead of these words, Fletew. has *compositos ad aliorum noti-*  
*tiam in lucem serieose produxit*.

<sup>6</sup> These words are not in Fletew.

<sup>7</sup> *Viam præcipue* quâ.

<sup>8</sup> Fletew. has instead, *in penitendo Christi misericordiam assequi*  
*poterit totâ mentis devotione finaliter contemplatur*.

<sup>9</sup> *Mediantis*. Fletew. *Hominis*. King.

It is rather extraordinary that Mr. Warton, who repeats this anecdote, should have passed it over without a comment; because, having previously told us that Gower, "by a critical cultivation of his native language, laboured to reform its irregularities, and to establish an English style," he might naturally have been tempted to inquire, why this style was never employed till the poet was past fifty years of age. Perhaps the circumstance may be partly explained by a remark of Mr. Tyrwhitt, who observes that Edward III. was insensible even to the poetical merits of Chaucer himself, "or at least had no mind to encourage him in the cultivation or exercise of them." He adds, "It should seem that Edward, though adorned with many royal and heroic virtues, had not the gift of discerning and patronizing a great poet; a gift which, like that of genuine poetry—is only bestowed on the chosen few by the peculiar favour of heaven." It is very certain that the *gift* of discerning the merits of a great English poet might have been bestowed on Edward by the peculiar favour of heaven, but it may be doubted whether he could reasonably be expected to possess it *without* such a special interposition.

It is to be remembered, that French had hitherto been the only language that was studied, though English was certainly not quite unknown at court; that Isabella, the mother of Edward, was a French woman; that he was sent to Paris at the very early age of thirteen, to assist her in her negotiations with her brother the king of France; that he was married by her means to Philippa, a princess of Hainault; that he was only fifteen years old when he mounted the throne; and that, after this period, the active scenes in which he was incessantly engaged were not likely to allow him much leisure for the purpose of completing his education. He began his reign two years before the birth of Chaucer, and could then have seen no specimens of English poetry superior to the dry

chronicles of Robert of Gloucester. It may be presumed, therefore, that if he read any poetry it would be that of the French minstrels ; and that his preference of their compositions to those of his countrymen was no great disparagement to his taste, may be inferred from the testimony of Chaucer himself, who says, in the *envoi* to his Complaint of Venus,

“ And eke to me it is a great *penance*,  
 Sith rhyme in English hath such scarcity,  
 To follow word by word the *curiosity*  
 Of *Graunson*, flower of hem that make in France.”

What was worth the *penance* of translating certainly deserved to be consulted in the original.

But political motives induced Edward to discourage the cultivation of French, the language of his enemies. Our native poetry received considerable improvements in the course of his long reign ; and his grandson, who found it in this cultivated state, and who was, perhaps, acquainted with Gower's poetical talents by means of his French sonnets already mentioned, may have naturally been solicitous that he should employ them in some English composition.

To return to the *Confessio Amantis*. This poem is a long dialogue between a lover and his *confessor*, who is a priest of Venus, and is called *Gemius*. As every vice is in its nature unamiable, it ought to follow that immorality is unavoidably punished by the indignation of the fair sex : and that every fortunate lover must, of necessity, be a good man and a good Christian ; and upon this presumption, which, perhaps, is not strictly warranted by experience, the confessor passes in review all the defects of the human character, and carefully scrutinizes the heart of his penitent with respect to each, before he will consent to give him absolution.

Because example is more impressive than precept, he illustrates his injunctions by a series of apposite tales, with the morality of which our lover professes to be highly edified ; and, being of a more inquisitive turn than lovers usually are, or perhaps hoping to subdue his mistress by directing against her the whole artillery of science, he gives his confessor an opportunity of incidentally instructing him in chemistry and in the Aristotelian philosophy. At length, all the interest that he has endeavoured to excite, by the long and minute details of his sufferings, and by manifold proofs of his patience, is rather abruptly and unexpectedly extinguished ; for he tells us, not that his mistress is inflexible or faithless, but that he is arrived at such a good old age, that the submission of his fair enemy would not have been sufficient for ensuring his triumph.

Through this elaborate work Gower appears to have distributed all the contents of his common-place book, and Mr. Warton has traced back many of these fragments to the obscure sources from whence they were derived. These are (besides Colonna's romantic history of Troy, and the *Gesta Romanorum*, already mentioned, which, with the romance of *Sir Lancelot*, though histories of a less general nature, Gower seems more immediately to have followed in some of his tales ;) the *Pantheon*, or *Memoriæ Seculorum*, a Latin chronicle, written partly in prose and partly in verse, by *Godfrey of Viterbo*, who died in 1190 ; the *Speculum Regum* of the same author ; the *Chronicle of Cassiodorus*, called *Chronicon breve*, written at the command of Theodoric king of the Goths ; and the *Chronicle of Isidorus*, called *Hispalensis*. "It is extremely probable," says Mr. Warton, "that the plan on which they are all constructed, that of deducing a perpetual history from the creation to the writer's age, was partly taken from Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, and partly from the Bible."

For the scientific part of his work Gower was most probably indebted to a spurious work attributed to Aristotle, called *Secretum Secretorum*, and to the Latin original of a treatise called *Les Dictes moraux des Philosophes, les Dictes des Sages, et les Secrets d'Aristote*, which was afterwards translated into English by the unfortunate Anthony Widville, first Earl of Rivers.

Chaucer, who knew and loved our poet, has comprised his character in a single epithet, and every reader must concur in the judgment of this great contemporary critic. While he is satisfied with being "*the moral Gower*," he always appears to advantage; he is wise, impressive, and sometimes almost sublime. The good sense and benevolence of his precepts, the solemnity with which they are enforced, and the variety of learning by which they are illustrated, make us forget that he is preaching in masquerade, and that our excellent instructor is a priest of Venus. But his narrative is often quite petrifying; and when we read in his work the tales with which we had been familiarized in the poems of Ovid, we feel a mixture of surprise and despair at the perverse industry employed in removing every detail on which the imagination had been accustomed to fasten. The author of the *Metamorphoses* was a poet, and at least sufficiently fond of ornament: Gower considers him as a mere annalist; scrupulously preserves his facts; relates them with great perspicuity; and is fully satisfied when he has extracted from them as much morality as they can be reasonably expected to furnish.

The popularity of this writer is, perhaps, not very likely to revive: but, although few modern readers will be tempted to peruse a poem of more than thirty thousand verses, written in obsolete English, without being allured by the hopes of more entertainment than can easily be derived from the *Confessio Amantis*, there are

parts of the work which might very probably be reprinted with advantage. Such are, the tale in folio 70, (edit. 1532,) beginning, "of Armenye I rede thus:" the tale in folio 85, from which Shakspeare has probably taken his incident of the caskets in the Merchant of Venice: a fable in folio 110, beginning, "To speak of an unkind man:" the story of a Faun and Hercules, folio 122, beginning, "The mightiest of all men;" that of Nectanabus and Olympias, folio 137: and the beautiful romantic tale of Appollynus Prince of Tyre, folio 175 to 185. It is also to be observed, that the fourth and seventh books, containing a very good compendium of nearly all the learning of the age, may be worth consulting.

It is usual to couple the names of Gower and Chaucer, as if these contemporary poets had possessed similar talents: the fairest method, therefore, to form an estimate of both, will be to give from the one a subject which has been attempted by the other. Gower's *Florent*, which he appears to have taken from the *Gesta Romanorum*, is generally supposed to be the original of Chaucer's *Wife of Bath's Tale*. The story has considerable merit; and it is told in Gower's best manner. These reasons, it is hoped, will excuse the insertion of so long a specimen from an author who was once extremely popular, and whom we have been accustomed to venerate, upon trust, as one of the fathers of English poetry <sup>1</sup>.

There was, whilòm, by dayes old,  
A worthy knight, as menne told;  
He was nephew to the emperour,  
And of his court a courtier:

<sup>1</sup> In order to render this extract as correct as possible, the text of edit. 1532, has been collated with three very ancient and valuable MSS. in the Bodleian library, quoted in the note at the beginning of this chapter.

Wife-less he was, Florent he hight.  
 He was a man that *mochel*<sup>1</sup> *might*<sup>2</sup> :  
 Of armes he was *désirous*,  
 Chevalerous, and amorous,  
 And, for the fame of worlde's speech,  
 Strange adventures for to *seche*<sup>3</sup>,  
 He rode the marches all about.

And fell a time, as he was out,  
 Fortune (which may every threde  
 To-break and knit of mannes speed)  
 Shope, as this knight rode in a pass,  
 That he by strength y-taken was ;  
 And to a castle they him *lad*<sup>4</sup>  
 Where that he fewe friendes had.  
 For so it fell, *that ilke stound*<sup>5</sup>  
 That he hath, with a deadly wound,  
 Fighting, [with] his own hande slain  
 Branchus, which to the captain  
 Was son and heir, whereof ben wroth  
 The father and the mother both ;  
 And fain they woulde do vengeance  
 Upon Florènt, but *rémembrance*  
 That they took of his worthiness  
 Of knighthood, and of gentleness,

<sup>1</sup> Much.<sup>2</sup> Could do.<sup>3</sup> Seek.<sup>4</sup> Led.<sup>5</sup> At that same time.



And how he stood of cousinage  
 To th' emperor, made them assuage,  
 And durst not slayen him for fear.  
 In great disputeson they were  
 Among them self, what was the best.

There was a lady, the slièst  
 Of all that menne knewe *tho*<sup>1</sup> :  
 So old, she might *unnethes*<sup>2</sup> go,  
 And was grandame unto the dead :  
 And she, with that, began to *rede*<sup>3</sup>,  
 And said how she will bring him in,  
 That she shall him to death win,  
 All only of his owen grant  
 Through strength of very covenant,  
 Without blame of any wight.  
 Anon she sent for this knight,  
 And of her sonne she *aleyd*<sup>4</sup>  
 The death, and thus to him she said :

“ Florent, howso thou be *to-wyte*<sup>5</sup>  
 Of Branchus' death, men shall respite  
*As now*<sup>6</sup> to take avengement,  
 Be so thou stand in judgement,  
 Upon certain condition :  
 That thou unto a question

<sup>1</sup> Then.<sup>2</sup> Scarce.<sup>3</sup> Advise.<sup>4</sup> Alleged.<sup>5</sup> Accused.<sup>6</sup> At present.

Which I shall aske shalt answere.  
 And, over this, thou shalt eke swear,  
 That if thou of the *sothe* fail,  
 There shall none other thing avail,  
 That thou ne shalt thy death receive.  
 And (for men shall thee nought deceive)  
 That thou thereof might ben advised,  
 Thou shalt have day and time *assised* ;  
 And leave safely for to wend :  
 Be so that at thy dayes end  
 Thou come again with thine *avise* <sup>1</sup>."

This knight, which worthy was, and wise,  
 This lady pray'th that he may *wyt* <sup>2</sup>,  
 And have it under seales writ,  
 What question it shoulde be,  
 For which he shall, in that degree,  
 Stand of his life in jeopardy.

With that, she feigneth company,  
 And saith, "Florènt, on love it hongeth,  
 All that to mine askinge 'longeth ;  
 WHAT ALLE WOMEN MOST DESIRE,  
 This will I ask : and in th' empire,  
 Whereas thou hast most knowledging  
 Take counsel upon this asking."

<sup>1</sup> Opinion.<sup>2</sup> Know.

Florent this thing hath undertake ;  
 The day was set, the time take :  
 Under his seal he wrote his oath  
 In such a wise, and forth he go'th  
 Home to his *eme's*<sup>1</sup> court again :  
 To whom his *aventure* plain  
 He told of that him is befall ;  
 And upon that they weren all,  
 The wisest of the land, *assent*<sup>2</sup> !

But natheless, of one assent  
 They mighte not accorde *plat*<sup>3</sup> :  
 One saide this, another that.  
 After the disposition  
 Of natural complexion,  
 To some woman it is *pleasànce*,  
 That to another is *grievànce* :  
 But such a thing, in special,  
 Which to them all in general  
 Is most *pleasànt*, and most desired  
 Above all other, and most conspired,  
 Such a thing can they not find,  
*By constellation ne kind*<sup>4</sup> ;  
 And thus Florènt, withoute cure,  
 Must stand upon his *aventure*.

\* \* \* \*

<sup>1</sup> Uncle's.

<sup>2</sup> Sent for.

<sup>3</sup> Plainly.

<sup>4</sup> Neither by the stars, nor by the laws of *kind*, or *nature*.

When time came, he took his leave,  
 That longer would he not *beleve*<sup>1</sup>,  
 And pray'th his *eme* he be not wroth,  
 For that is a point of his oath,  
 He saith, that no man shall him *wreak*<sup>2</sup>,  
 Though afterward men heare speak  
 That he peraventure die.  
 And thus he wente forth his way  
 Alone as knight aventurous,  
 And in his thought was curious  
 To *wite* what was best to do.

And as he rode alone so,  
 And came nigh there he would be,  
 In a forèst under a tree,  
 He saw where sat a créature,  
 A loathly womanish figùre,  
 That, for to speak of flesh and bone,  
 So foul yet saw he never none.

This knight beheld her readily,  
 And, as he would have passed by,  
 She cleped him, and bade abide ;  
 And he his horse's head aside  
*Tho*<sup>3</sup> turned, and to her he rode,

<sup>1</sup> Remain.<sup>2</sup> Revenge.<sup>3</sup> Then.

And there he *hoved*<sup>1</sup> and abode,  
To *wite* what she woulde mean.

And she began him to *bemene*<sup>2</sup>  
And saide, "Florent, by thy name!  
Thou hast on hande such a game,  
That, but thou be the better avised,  
Thy death is shapen and devised,  
That all the world ne may thee save  
But if that thou my counsel have."

Florent, when he this tale heard,  
Unto this olde wight answe'r'd,  
And of her counsel he her pray'd,  
And she again to him thus said:  
"Florent, if I for thee so shape,  
That thou through me thy death escape,  
And take worship of thy deed,  
What shall I have to my meed?"  
"What thing," quod he, "that thou wilt *axe*."  
"I bidde never a better tax,"  
Quod she, "but first, *or* thou be sped,  
Thou shalt me leave such a *wed*<sup>3</sup>  
That I will have thy troth on hand  
That thou shalt be mine hóuseband."

<sup>1</sup> Hover'd.<sup>2</sup> Bemoan.<sup>3</sup> Pledge. Sax.

"Nay," said Florènt, "that may not be!"  
 "Ride thenne forth thy way!" quod she.  
 "And if thou go forth without *rede*<sup>1</sup>  
 Thou shalt be *sekerliche*<sup>2</sup> dead."  
 Florent *behight*<sup>3</sup> her good enow,  
 Of land, of rent, of park, of plough,  
 But all that counteth she at nought.

*Tho* fell this knight in *mochel* thought.  
 Now go'th he forth, now com'th again,  
 He wot not what is best to sayn,  
 And thought, as he rode to and fro,  
 That choose he must one of the two;  
 Or for to take her to his wife,  
 Or elles for to lose his life:  
 And then he cast his *avantage*,  
 That she was of so great an age,  
 That she may live but a while;  
 And thought to put her in an isle,  
 Where that no man her shoulde know  
 Till she with death were overthrow.

And thus this younge lusty knight  
 Unto this olde loathly wight  
*Tho* said: "If that none other chance  
 May make my deliverance,

<sup>1</sup> Counsel. Sax.<sup>2</sup> Surely.<sup>3</sup> Promised.

But only thilke same speech  
 Which as thou say'st thou shalt me teach,  
 Have here mine hand, I shall thee wed !"  
 And thus his troth he lay'th to wed.  
 With that, she *frounceth*<sup>1</sup> up the brow :  
 " This covenant I will allow ;"  
 She saith, " if any other thing  
 But that thou hast of my teaching,  
 Fro' death thy body may respìte,  
 I will thee of thy troth acquite :  
 And elles, by none other way.  
 Now hearken me what I shall say.  
 When thou art come into the place  
 Where now they maken great menàce,  
 And upon thy comìng abide :  
 They will, anon, the same *tide*<sup>2</sup>  
 Oppose thee of thine answèr.  
 I wot thou wilt no thing forbear,  
 Of that thou weenest be thy best,  
 And, if thou mightest so find rest,  
 Well is: for then is there no more ;  
 And elles, this shall be my lore.

" That thou shalt say—*Upon this mold*<sup>3</sup>  
 That ALLE WOMEN LIEVEST WOULD  
 BE SOVEREIGN OF MANNES LOVE :  
*For, what womàn is so above,*

<sup>1</sup> Wrinkleth.<sup>2</sup> Time. Sax.<sup>3</sup> Earth.

*She hath (as who sayth) all her will :*  
*And elles may she not fulfill*  
*What thing her were lievest have.*  
With this answer thou shalt save  
Thy self, and otherwise nought :  
And when thou hast thine ende wrought,  
Come here again, thou shalt me find,  
And let no thing out of thy mind."

He go'th him forth with heavy cheer,  
As he that *n'ot*<sup>1</sup> in what manere  
He may this worldes joy attain.  
For if he die, he hath a pain :  
And if he live, he must him bind  
To such one, which if alle kind  
Of women is th' unseemliest.  
Thus wote he not what is the best.  
But, be him lief, or be him loth,  
Unto the castle forth he go'th,  
His full answer for to give,  
Or for to die, or for to live.

Forth with his council came the lord,  
The thinges stooden of record,  
He sent up for the lady soon :  
And forth she came, that olde *monne*<sup>2</sup>,

<sup>1</sup> Knew not.

<sup>2</sup> *Monne*, a monkey. (Cotgrave's French Dictionary.)



In presence of the remenant ;  
 The strength of all the covenant  
*Tho* was rehearsed openly,  
 And to Florènt she bade *forthi* <sup>1</sup>  
 That he shall tellen his *avise*  
 As he that wote what is the price.

Florent saith all that ever he *couth* <sup>2</sup>,  
 But such word came there none to mouth,  
 That he for gift or for behest  
 Might any wise his death arrest.  
 And thus he tarrieth long and late  
 Till that this lady bade *algàte*  
 That he shall for the doom finàl  
 Give his *answèr* in special  
 Of that she had him first opposed.

And then he hath truly supposed  
 That he him may of nothing *yelp* <sup>3</sup>  
 But if so be *tho* <sup>4</sup> wordes help  
 Which as the woman hath him taught :  
 Whereof he hath an hope caught  
 That he shall be excused so,  
 And told out plain his wille *tho*.

And when that this *matròne* heard  
 The manner how this knight *answèr'd*,

<sup>1</sup> Forthwith.<sup>2</sup> Knew.<sup>3</sup> Prate.<sup>4</sup> Those.

She said, "Ha! treason! woe thee be!  
 That hast thus told the privity  
 Which alle women most desire.  
 I woulde that thou were a-fire!"  
 But natheless, in such a plight  
 Florent of his answer is quite.  
 And *tho* began his sorrow new:  
 For he must gone, or be untrue  
 To *hire* which his trothe had.  
 But he, which alle shame *drad*<sup>1</sup>,  
 Go'th forth in stead of his penance,  
 And tak'th the fortune of his chance,  
 As he that was with troth *affayted*<sup>2</sup>.

This old wight him hath awaited  
 In place where as he *hire* left.

Florent his woeful head up-lift,  
 And saw this *vecke*<sup>3</sup> where she sit,  
 Which was the loathlieste wight  
 That ever man cast on his eye.  
 Her nose *bas*<sup>4</sup>, her browes high,  
 Her eyen smalle, and depe-set.  
 Her chekes ben with teres wet,  
 And *rivelen*<sup>5</sup> as an empty skin  
*Hangende*<sup>6</sup> down unto the chin.

<sup>1</sup> Dreaded.<sup>3</sup> Old woman.<sup>5</sup> Shrivelled.<sup>2</sup> Adorned. Old Fr.<sup>4</sup> Low.<sup>6</sup> Hanging.

Her lippes shrunken ben for age ;  
 There was no grace in her visàge.  
 Her front was narrow, her locks hoar ;  
 She looketh forth as doth a Moor.  
 Her neck is short, her shoulders *courb* <sup>1</sup>,  
 That might a mannes lust distourb.  
 Her body, great, and nothing small :  
 And, shortly to describe her all,  
 She hath no *lyth* <sup>2</sup> without a lack,  
 But like unto a wolfe-sack.

She proffer'th her unto this knight,  
 And bade him, as he hath *behight* <sup>3</sup>  
 (So as she hath been his warrànt,)
 That he her holde covenant ;  
 And by the bridle she him seizeth,  
 But God wot how that she him pleaseth !  
 Of suche wordes as she speaketh  
 Him thinketh well-nigh his heart breaketh  
 For sorrow that he may not flee  
 But if he woulde untrue be.

Look how a sick man for his *hele* <sup>4</sup>  
 Tak'th *baldemoyne* <sup>5</sup> with the *canele* <sup>6</sup>,

<sup>1</sup> Crooked.

<sup>2</sup> Limb.

<sup>3</sup> Promised.

<sup>4</sup> Cure.

<sup>5</sup> Perhaps a mistake of the copyist for *bolearmene*, i. e. Armenian  
 bole, once thought a specific against poison, &c.

<sup>6</sup> Cinnamon.

And with the myrrh taketh the *succe*<sup>1</sup> ;  
Right upon such a manner lucre  
Stands Florent, as, in this diete,  
He drink'th the bitter with the sweet ;  
He *meddleth*<sup>2</sup> sorrow with liking,  
And liveth (as who saith) dying.  
His youthe shall be cast away  
Upon such one which, as the way,  
Is old, and loathly over all.  
But, nede he must that nede shall.  
He would, *algate*<sup>3</sup>, his trothe hold,  
As every knight thereto is hold,  
What hap soever him is befall.  
Though she be the foulèst of all,  
Yet, to honoür of woman-hed,  
Him thought he shoulde taken heed :  
So that, for pure *gentiless*,  
As he her couthe best address,  
In ragges as she was to-tore,  
He set her on his horse to-fore,  
And forth he taketh his way soft.

No wonder though he sigheth oft !  
But, as an owl flyeth by night  
Out of all other birdes' sight,  
Right so this knight on dayes broad  
In close him held, and shope his road

<sup>1</sup> Sugar.<sup>2</sup> Mixeth.<sup>3</sup> Always.

On nighte's time, till the *tide* <sup>1</sup>  
 That he come there he would abide :  
 And privily, without noise,  
 He bring'th this foule greate *coise* <sup>2</sup>  
 To his castell, in such a wise  
 That no man might her shape avise,  
 Till she into the chamber came,  
 Where he his privy council *name* <sup>3</sup>,  
 Of suche men as he most trust ;  
 And told them that he nedes must  
 This beste wedde to his wife,  
 For elles had he lost his life.

The privy women were a-sent,  
 That shoulde ben of his assent :  
 Her ragges they anon off draw,  
 And, as it was that time law,  
 She hadde bath, she hadde rest,  
 And was arrayed to the best.  
 But with no craft of combes brode  
 They might her hore lockes *shode* <sup>4</sup>,  
 And she ne woulde nought be *shore* <sup>5</sup>  
 For no counsèl : and they therefore,

<sup>1</sup> Time.

<sup>2</sup> Probably *incumbrance*, from *coisser*, incommode. Old Fr. See La Combe's Dict.

<sup>3</sup> Took ; *nim*. Sax. "Nim a purse," Shakspeare.

<sup>4</sup> Shed, i. e. separate, disentangle.

<sup>5</sup> Shorn.

With such attire as *tho* was used,  
Ordainen that it was excused,  
And hid so craftily about  
That no man mighte seen them out.

But when she was fully array'd,  
And her attire was all assay'd,  
*Tho* was she fouler unto see !  
But yet it may none other be :  
They were wedded in the night.  
So woe-begone was never knight  
As he was then of marriage !  
And she began to play and rage,  
As who saith I am well enough.  
(But he thereof nothing ne *lough* <sup>1</sup>)  
For she took thenne cheer on hand,  
And *clepeth* <sup>2</sup> him her hóuseband,  
And saith, " My Lord, go we to bed !  
For I to that intent thee wed,  
That thou shalt be my worldes bliss ;"  
And proffer'th him with that to kiss,  
As she a lusty lady were.  
His body mighte well be there ;  
But as of thought, and of *memoire*,  
His hearte was in *purgatoire*.

<sup>1</sup> Laughed.<sup>2</sup> Calleth. Sax.

But yet, for strength of *matrimoine*,  
He mighte make none *essoine*<sup>1</sup>  
That he ne mote *algates plie*<sup>2</sup>  
To go to bed of company.  
And when they were a-bedde naked,  
Withoute sleep he was awaked ;  
He turneth on that other side,  
For that he would his eyen hide  
Fro looking of that foule wight.  
The chamber was all full of light ;  
The curtains were of *sendall*<sup>3</sup> thin :  
This newe bride which lay within,  
Though it be nought with his accord,  
In armes she beclipt her lord,  
And pray'd, as he was turned fro,  
He would him turn again-ward *tho*.  
For "now," she saith, "we be both one ;"  
But he lay still as any stone ;  
And ever in one she spake and pray'd,  
And bade him think on that he said  
When that he took her by the hond.

He heard, and understood the bond,  
How he was set to his penance :  
And, as it were a man in trance,  
He turneth him all suddenly,  
And saw a lady lie him by

<sup>1</sup> Excuse. Fr.<sup>2</sup> Yield. Fr.<sup>3</sup> Silk.

Of eighteteene winter age <sup>1</sup>,  
 Which was the fairest of visàge  
 That ever in all the world he *sigh* <sup>2</sup>;  
 And as he would have take her nigh,  
 She put her hand, and by his *leve* <sup>3</sup>  
 Besought him that he would leave,  
 And say'th, that for to win or *lese* <sup>4</sup>  
 He mote one of two thinges *chese* <sup>5</sup>,  
*Wher* <sup>6</sup> he will have her such o'night,  
 Or elles upon daye's light,  
 For he shall not have bothe two.

And he began to sorrow *tho*,  
 In many a wise, and cast his thought,  
 But for all that, yet could he nought  
 Devise himself which was the best :  
 And she, that would his hearte rest,  
 Pray'th that he shoulde chuse algate :  
 Till at the laste, long and late  
 He said, " O ye, my life's *hele* <sup>7</sup>,  
 Say what ye list in my *querele* <sup>8</sup>,  
 I n'ot what answer I shall give,  
 But ever, while that I may live,  
 I will, that ye be my mistrèss,  
 For I can nought myselve guess

<sup>1</sup> The Saxons always computed time by winters and nights.

<sup>2</sup> Saw.

<sup>3</sup> Love.

<sup>4</sup> Lose.

<sup>5</sup> Choose.

<sup>6</sup> Whether.

<sup>7</sup> Medicine.

<sup>8</sup> Dispute.



Which is the best unto my choice.  
Thus grant I you mine whole voice :  
Chuse for us bothen, I you pray !  
And, what as ever that ye say,  
Right as ye wille, so will I."

" My lord," she saide, "*grand-merci* <sup>1</sup> !  
For of this word that ye now sayn,  
That ye have made me sovereign,  
My destiny is over passed ;  
That never hereafter shall be *lassed* <sup>2</sup>  
My beauty, which that I now have,  
Till I betake unto my grave.  
Both night and day, as I am now,  
I shall alway be such to you.  
The kinges daughter of Sicile  
I am ; and *fell* <sup>3</sup> but sith a while,  
As I was with my father late,  
That my step-mother, for an hate  
Which toward me she hath begun,  
*For-shope* <sup>4</sup>, till I hadde won  
The love and the sovereignty  
Of what knight that in his degree  
All other passeth of good name :  
And, as men seyn, ye be the same,

<sup>1</sup> Many thanks.

<sup>3</sup> It befell.

<sup>2</sup> Lessened.

<sup>4</sup> Mis-shaped.

The deede proveth it is so.  
Thus am I yours for evermo."

*Tho* was pleasànce and joy enough ;  
Each one with other play'd and *lough*<sup>1</sup> ;  
They lived long, and well they far'd,  
And clerkes, that this chance heard,  
They written it in evidence,  
To teach, how that obedience  
May well fortune a man to love,  
And set him in his lust above.  
(Fol. 15, ed. 1532.)

<sup>1</sup> Laughed.

## CHAPTER VIII.

*Reign of Edward III. continued.*

## GEOFFREY CHAUCER.

GEOFFREY CHAUCER has had many biographers ; but the authentic documents respecting his life are so few, that his last editor, Mr. Tyrwhitt, to whom this great poet will be principally indebted for the rational admiration of posterity, has contented himself with a bare recital of the following genuine anecdotes, instead of attempting to work them into a connected narrative, in which much must have been supplied by mere conjecture, or by a forced interpretation of the allusions scattered through the works of the poet.

The original inscription on his tombstone is said to have proved that he died in 1400, aged 72, so that he was born in 1328 ; and he has himself told us that his birth-place was London. Of his family we know absolutely nothing. From a passage in his Court of Love, where he calls himself "Philogenet of Cambridge, clerk," it may be inferred that he was educated in that university ; and it is presumed that he was afterwards entered at the Inner Temple, because the records of that inn are said to state that he was fined two shillings for beating a Franciscan friar in Fleet-street <sup>1</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Ritson (Bibliogr. Poet. p. 19, note) says that this anecdote is "a *hum* of Thomas Chatterton." See his Miscellanies, p. 137.— But as the story is related in Speght's editions of Chaucer (1598, 1602), on the evidence of a Master Buckley, it remains for Mr. Ritson to prove that what he elegantly calls Chatterton's *hum* has had a retroactive effect on the understanding of the said Master Buckley, who lived, and probably died, in the 16th century.

By what means, or at what period, he first recommended himself to his patron, John of Gaunt, whose persevering kindness seems to have accompanied him through life, is not known ; but the mysterious descriptions in his *Dream*, are considered as evidence that he enjoyed the confidence and familiarity of that prince during his courtship of Blanche, the heiress of the house of Lancaster, whom he married in 1359 ; and it was probably to their recommendation that our poet owed his introduction into the royal household, in which we find him established in the year 1367.

In this year (the 41st of Edward III.) a patent occurs, by which the king grants to Chaucer an annuity of 20 marks, by the title of *Valettus noster* ; an office which, by whatever name we translate it, might be held even by persons of the highest rank, because the only science then in request among the nobility was that of etiquette, the knowledge of which was acquired, together with the habits of chivalry, by passing in gradation through the several menial offices about the court. Chaucer was at this time thirty-nine years of age, and did not acquire the rank of *scutifer*, or esquire, till five years afterwards. By this new title he was appointed, with two others, king's envoy to Genoa, and it was perhaps on this occasion that he made acquaintance with Petrarch, whom he professes to have seen at Padua.

The object of this mission is not mentioned, but it may be supposed to have related to some pecuniary or commercial negotiation ; and it may be farther presumed, that Chaucer acquitted himself much to the king's satisfaction, because from this time we find him distinguished by repeated marks of royal favour. In 1374, he obtained a grant for life of a pitcher of wine daily ; and was appointed to the office of comptroller of the customs of wool, &c. in the port of London. In the next year the king granted him the wardship of Sir Edmund Staple-

gate's heir, for which he received 104*l.*, and the year following some forfeited wool to the value of 71*l.* 4*s.* 6*d.* : and in the last year of this reign he was sent to France, with Sir Guichard D'Angle, and Richard Stan [or Sturry], to treat of a marriage between Richard, then prince of Wales, and a daughter of the French king.

Chaucer frequently alludes to a period of his life, at which he was possessed of considerable opulence ; and it will appear, by a review of the several grants just mentioned, that he had great reason to be satisfied with the munificence of his royal master. The mark of silver, in which these grants are estimated, contained eight ounces, and consequently was equal to 40 shillings, as the pound was to 4*l.*, of our present denomination ; and as the representative value of silver is generally supposed to have been five times greater in the reign of Edward III. than it is at present, it will follow that the value of the mark in our present money may be estimated at 10*l.*, and Chaucer's original annuity at 200*l.* The grant of wine was of the same value, because it was afterwards exchanged for an annuity of 20 marks. The two gratifications in money, amounting together to 175*l.* 4*s.* 6*d.* were, upon the same principles of calculation, equivalent to 3500*l.* : so that Chaucer appears to have received, during the three last years of this reign, a sum equal to the present value of 4700*l.* (including the two annuities), without taking into account his receipts as comptroller of the customs, which were probably much greater, nor the rewards of his mission to France, which may be supposed to have been considerable.

It has been already observed, that Mr. Tyrwhitt was a little displeased with Edward III. for having exposed Chaucer's genius to the *petrifying* influence of custom-house accounts : but it should be remembered that Chaucer voluntarily exposed his talents to an almost equal risk by composing a treatise on the astrolabe ; that

his mathematical skill was perhaps not very uselessly employed in unravelling the confusion of the public accounts; that the task thus imposed upon him was at least no mean compliment to his probity; and that, after all, it produced no fatal effect on his genius, if, as Mr. Tyrwhitt conjectures, it did not prevent him from writing his House of Fame during the intervals of his labour.

The succeeding reign was by no means equally propitious to the fortunes of Chaucer. The grant of his pension was, indeed, confirmed to him, and his grant of wine replaced by an equivalent annuity of 20 marks, at the accession of Richard II., but his real or supposed interference in the intrigues of city politics, during the mayoralty of John of Northampton, appears to have drawn upon him the displeasure of the king, and to have involved him in pecuniary distresses from which he was never after able to extricate himself. In 1388, he was obliged to part with his two pensions, and though, by the intervention, as it seems, of the Duke of Lancaster, he was, in 1390, restored to favour, and successively appointed clerk of the works at Westminster and Windsor, besides which he received, in 1397, a grant of a new pension of 20 marks, we find him obliged to accept, in 1398, a protection for two years, a proof that he had by no means recovered his former affluence. In the last year of this reign he obtained a new annual grant of a pipe of wine, and the revolution in favour of Henry IV., the son of his constant benefactor, would probably have raised him to greater affluence than he had ever enjoyed, but he died in the next year, after having received a confirmation of the last favours bestowed on him by Richard II., and a farther grant of an annuity of 40 marks.

After reading, in the circumstantial accounts of Chaucer's biographers, that he was married in 1360 to Philippa Rouet, by whom he had issue Thomas Chaucer and other

children, we are surprised to learn that it is doubtful whether Thomas Chaucer was his son ; that the earliest known evidence of his marriage is a record of 1381, in which he receives a half-year's payment of an annuity of 10 marks granted by Edward III. to his wife, as one of the maids of honour (*domicellæ*) lately in the service of Queen Philippa ; that the name of Philippa Rouet does not occur in the list of these maids of honour, but that Chaucer's wife may possibly have been Philippa Pykard ; that, notwithstanding this, his said wife was certainly sister to Catharine Rouet, who married a Sir John Swynford, and was the favourite mistress, and ultimately the wife, of the Duke of Lancaster ; and that Chaucer himself mentions no son but Lewis, whom he states to have been born in 1381, a date which seems to agree with the record above-mentioned, and to place the date of his marriage in 1380. The task of unravelling these obscurities must be left to future biographers.

As our principal concern is with the literary character of this poet, it would be unpardonable to omit the following estimate of his writings, extracted from Dr. Johnson's introduction to his Dictionary.

" He may, perhaps, with great justice, be styled the first of our versifiers who wrote poetically. He does not, however, appear to have deserved all the praise which he has received, or all the censure that he has suffered. Dryden, who, mistaking genius for learning, and in confidence of his abilities, ventured to write of what he had not examined, ascribes to Chaucer the first refinement of our numbers, the first production of easy and natural rhymes, and the improvement of our language, by words borrowed from the more polished languages of the continent. Skinner contrarily blames him in harsh terms for having vitiated his native speech by *whole cart-loads of foreign words*. But he that reads the works of Gower will find smooth numbers and easy rhymes, of

which Chaucer is supposed to have been the inventor, and the French words, whether good or bad, of which Chaucer is charged as the importer. Some innovations he might probably make, like others, in the infancy of our poetry, which the paucity of books does not allow us to discover with particular exactness ; but the works of Gower and Lydgate sufficiently evince, that his diction was in general like that of his contemporaries ; and some improvements he undoubtedly made by the various dispositions of his rhymes, and by the mixture of different numbers, in which he seems to have been happy and judicious."

This compendious piece of criticism contains a full refutation of Skinner's very absurd charge, at the same time that the severe and unnecessary censure on Dryden exhibits a strong instance of the very haste and inaccuracy which it condemns. It is scarcely credible that Dryden, while he was employed in paraphrasing the Knight's Tale, and the Flower and the Leaf, which are perhaps the most finished specimens of his poetry, and at the same time very faithful copies of his original, should have entirely neglected to consult the contemporary poets, whose works were necessary to the explanation of Chaucer's language. Perhaps he was likely to read them in search of those beauties which tradition reported them to contain, and which he might hope to appropriate without detection. Dryden, indeed, who was condemned to write in haste, had not leisure, perhaps he would not have had patience, to consult the various manuscripts of his author, and to compare Chaucer with himself and with the obscure versifiers who preceded him : his opinion, therefore, is inaccurate ; but he is mistaken in his censure, not in his encomium.

The researches of Mr. Tyrwhitt have proved what Dryden denied, viz. that Chaucer's versification, wherever



his genuine text is preserved, was uniformly correct ; although the harmony of his lines has in many instances been obliterated by the changes that have taken place in the mode of accenting our language. But Chaucer's reputation as an improver of our versification principally rests on the invention (or at least on the first adoption) of the ten-syllable or heroic verse, of that verse which has been employed by every poet of eminence from Spenser to Dr. Johnson, and in which its original inventor has left many specimens, both in the Knight's Tale and in the Flower and the Leaf, which Dryden despaired of improving.

With respect to Chaucer's language, it is impossible not to feel some disappointment at the cautious and doubtful opinion delivered by the author of our national dictionary, and delivered in the introduction to that truly noble monument of his genius. That Chaucer "*might probably make some innovations,*" and that "*his diction was in general like that of his contemporaries,*" we should have conjectured without Dr. Johnson's assistance ; because a writer of genius and learning will be likely to make some innovations in a barbarous language, but, in so doing, will not choose to become quite unintelligible. From a critic so intimately acquainted with the mechanism of language we should have expected to learn, whether Chaucer had in any degree added to the precision of our English idiom by improvements of its syntax, or to its harmony by the introduction of more sonorous words ; or whether he was solely indebted for the beauty and perspicuity of his style to that happy selection of appropriate expressions which distinguishes every writer of original thinking and real genius.

All Chaucer's immediate successors, those who studied him as their model, Hoccleve, Lydgate, King James I., &c. speak with rapture of the elegance and splendour of his diction. He is "the flower of eloquence ;" "superla-

tive in eloquence ;" his words are "the gold dew-drops of speech." Such exaggerated praises certainly imply an enthusiastic, though, perhaps, absurd admiration ; and, as these poets would probably attempt to imitate what they considered as eminently beautiful, it seems likely that an examination of their style must enable us to discover what they considered as the improvements introduced by Chaucer.

Now the characteristics of our poetry during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries are an exuberance of ornament, and an affectation of Latinity, neither of which peculiarities are to be found in Robert of Gloucester, Robert de Brunne, Minot, Langland, or indeed in any of the poets anterior to Chaucer. This, therefore, may be supposed to be what Chaucer himself and his successors meant by what they called an *ornate style*, of which the following stanza, extracted from the Court of Love, is a curious specimen :

Honour to thee, *celestial* and clear,  
 Goddess of love, and to thy *celitude*,  
 That giv'st us light so far down from thy sphere,  
 Piercing our heartes with thy *pulchritude* !  
 Comparison none of *similitude*  
 May to thy grace be made in no degree,  
 That hast us set with love in unity.

(St. 88, fol. 330, ed. 1602.)

It is not meant that this is an example of Chaucer's usual style ; indeed no poet is, in general, more free from pedantry : but the attentive reader will find that in the use of words of Latin derivation, most of which are common to the French and Italian languages, he very generally prefers the inflections of the latter, either as thinking them more sonorous, or because they are nearer to the original ; and that in his descriptive poetry he is very fond of multiplying his epithets, and of copying all

the other peculiarities of the Italian poetry (from which his favourite metre is unquestionably derived), with the view of "refining our numbers, and improving our language by words borrowed from the more polished languages of the Continent."

With respect to his success in these endeavours there has been a considerable difference of opinion ; but he has been most admired by those who were best qualified to appreciate his merit. Spenser, his warmest panegyrist, had studied him with very minute and particular attention ; and though many readers will not concur with him in thinking that Chaucer's compositions are "the well of English undefiled," they will admit that Spenser formed his judgment with due deliberation, and that he evinced the sincerity of his belief by trusting the success of his own poetical reputation to the same antiquated phraseology.

From a general review of all Chaucer's works it will appear that he entertained a very mean opinion of his native language, and of the poets who had employed it ; and that he was, during a great part of his life, incessantly occupied in translating the works of the French, Italian, and Latin poets. His *Romaunt of the Rose* is a professed translation from *William de Lorris* and *John de Meun* : the long and beautiful Romance of *Troilus and Creseide* is principally imitated from *Boccaccio's Filostrato* : the Legend of Good Women is a free translation from *Ovid's Epistles*, combined with histories of his heroines derived from various Latin chronicles : the House of Fame is a similar compilation : *Palamon and Arcite* is known to be an imitation of the *Teseida of Boccaccio*. On the whole, it may be doubted whether he thought himself sufficiently qualified to undertake an original composition till he was sixty years of age, at which time it is conjectured that he formed and began to execute the plan of his *Canterbury Tales*.

This elaborate work was apparently intended to contain a delineation of all the prominent characters in society ; these were to be sketched out in an introductory prologue, to be contrasted by characteristic dialogues, and probably to be engaged in incidents which should farther develop their peculiarities of disposition : and, as stories were absolutely necessary in every popular work, an appropriate tale was to be assigned to each of the pilgrims. It is not extraordinary that the remainder of Chaucer's life should have been insufficient for the completion of such a plan. What is actually executed can only be considered as a fragment ; but, imperfect as it is, it contains more information respecting the manners and customs of the fourteenth century than could be gleaned from the whole mass of contemporary writers, English or foreign ; and the poetical beauties with which it abounds, have ensured to its author the first rank among the English poets anterior to Shakespeare.

As it would be absurd to crowd the present short sketch with formal extracts from a work so generally known and admired, the following specimens will be principally taken from Chaucer's less popular compositions, and will be selected with an attention to other objects than that of exhibiting proofs of his poetical excellence.

Addison has observed, that "a reader seldom peruses a book with pleasure, till he knows whether the writer of it be a black or a fair man, of a mild or cholerick disposition, married or a bachelor, with other particulars of the like nature, that conduce very much to the right understanding of an author." Montaigne was certainly of the same opinion ; and Chaucer, though he has told us nothing of his birth, has taken care to inform us that he was corpulent, and had a habit of looking on the ground, the result of frequent meditation.

——— our host to *japen*<sup>1</sup> he began,  
 And then *at erst*<sup>2</sup> he looked upon me,  
 And saide thus : " What man art thou ? " quod he :  
 " Thou lookest as thou wouldest find a hare !  
 For ever upon the ground I see thee stare.  
 Approche near, and look up merrily !  
 Now ware you, sirs, and let this man have place ;  
 He in the waist is shapen as well as I.  
 This were a puppet in arms to embrace  
 For any woman, small and fair of face !  
 He seemeth elvish by his countenance,  
 For unto no wight doth he dalliance."

(The words of the Host to Chaucer, prefixed  
 to the rime of Sir Thopas.)

His love of reading is mentioned repeatedly ; but the  
 following passages are perhaps the most remarkable for  
 the quaint simplicity of the style.

Of usage, what for *lust*<sup>3</sup>, and what for *lore*<sup>4</sup>,  
 On bookes read I oft, as I you told  
 But, wherefore speake I all this ? not *yore*<sup>5</sup>  
 Agone, it happed [for] to behold  
 Upon a brook was y-written with letters old,  
 And thereupon a certain thing to learn,  
 The longe day full fast I red and *yern*<sup>6</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> Jest.

<sup>2</sup> Pleasure.

<sup>5</sup> Far, long.

<sup>3</sup> At first.

<sup>4</sup> Learning.

<sup>6</sup> Eagerly.

Four out of the old fieldes, as men saith,  
 Cometh all this new corn fro year to year ;  
 And out of olde bookes, in good faith,  
 Cometh all this new science that men *lere* <sup>1</sup> :  
 But now to purpose : as of this mattere  
 To rede forth, it gan me so delight  
 That all that day methought it but a *lite* <sup>2</sup>.

(Assemb. of Fowls, st. 3.)

Again, in the Legend of Good Women :

And as for me, though that I *can* <sup>3</sup> but *lite*,  
 On bookes for to read I me delight,  
 And to *hem* give I faith and full credence,  
 And in mine heart have *hem* in reverence  
 So heartily, that there is game none  
 That fro my bookes maketh me to gone,  
 But it be seldom, on the holy day ;  
 Save, certainly, when that the month of May  
 Is comen, and that I hear the fowles sing,  
 And that the floures 'ginnen for to spring,  
 Farewell my book and my devotion.

(Prologue, verse 29.)

To his frequent morning walks we are indebted for the many beautiful specimens of descriptive poetry with which his works abound : as, for instance, in the Complaint of the Black Knight :

<sup>1</sup> Learn.

<sup>2</sup> Little.

<sup>3</sup> Ken, know.

I rose anon, and thought I woulde gone  
 Into the wood, to hear the birdes sing,  
 When that the misty vapour was agone,  
 And clear and faire was the *morronyng*;  
 The dew also like silver in shining  
 Upon the leaves as any baume sweet:  
 Till fiery Titan with his *persant*<sup>1</sup> heat

Had dried up the lusty liquor new  
 Upon the herbes in the grene mead;  
 And that the flowers, of many divers hue,  
 Upon *her* stalkes *gonne*<sup>2</sup> for to spread,  
 And for to 'splaye out *her* leues in *brede*<sup>3</sup>  
 Again the sun, *gold-burned*<sup>4</sup> in his sphere,  
 That downe to *hem* cast his beames clear.

And by a river forth I gan *costay*<sup>5</sup>  
 Of water clear as beryl or chrystàl,  
 Till, at the last, I found a little way  
 Toward a park, enclosed with a wall  
 In compass round, and by a gate small:  
 Whoso that woulde, freely mighte gone  
 Into this park walled with grene stone.

And in I went to hear the birdes' song,  
 Which on the branches, both in plain and vale,

<sup>1</sup> Piercing.

<sup>2</sup> Began.

<sup>3</sup> Abroad.

<sup>4</sup> Gold-burnished.

<sup>5</sup> *Costoyer, cotoyer.* Fr.; to coast.

So loude sang that all the woode rong  
 Like as it should shiver in pieces smale ;  
 And as methoughte that the nightingale  
 With so great might her voice gan out-wrest  
 Right as her hearte for love woulde *brest*.

The soil was plaine, smooth, and wonder soft,  
 All over-spread with *tapets* that Nature  
 Had made herself ; covered eke aloft  
 With boughes green, the floures for to *cure*,  
 That in *her* beauty they may long endure  
 From all assault of Phoebus' fervent *ferē*<sup>1</sup>,  
 Which in his sphere so hote shone and clear.

The air *attempre*, and the smoothe wind  
 Of Zephyrus among the blossoms white  
 So wholesome was and so nourishing *by kind*<sup>2</sup>,  
 That smale buddes and round blossoms *lite*  
 In manner gan of her breathe delight,  
 To give us hope there fruit shall take  
 Against autumne ready for to shake.

\* \* \* \*

There saw I eke the fresh haw-thorn,  
 In white motley, that so *swote* doeth smell ;  
 Ash, fir, and oak, with many a young acòrn,

<sup>1</sup> Fire.

<sup>2</sup> In its nature.



And many a tree mo than I can tell ;  
And, me before, I saw a little well  
That had his course, as I gan behold,  
Under an hill, with quicke streames cold.

The gravel gold ; the water pure as glass ;  
The bankes round the well environing ;  
And softe as velvet the younge grass  
That thereupon lustily came springing.  
The suit of trees aboute compassing  
*Her* shadow caste closing the well round,  
And all the herbes growing on the ground.

(St. 4.)

Chaucer has also taken care to tell us that he was magnificently lodged :

And sooth to sayn, my chamber was  
Full well depainted, and with *glass*  
*Were all the windows well y-glazed*  
Full clear, and not an hole y-crazed,  
That to behold it was great joy :  
For wholly all the story of Troy <sup>1</sup>  
Was in the glazing y-wrought thus,  
Of Hector and of king Priamus ;  
Of Achilles, and of king Lamedon,  
And eke of Medea and of Jasòn ;

<sup>1</sup> The Painted Chamber, adjoining the House of Lords, represents the siege of Troy ; and the tapestry was placed there at the marriage of Richard II.

Of Paris, Helen, and of Lavine.  
 And all the walls with colours fine  
 Were painte bothe text and glose,  
 And all the Romaunt of the Rose.

(Book of the Duchess, verse 321, fol. 228,  
 ed. 1602.)

He mentions another room which was curiously  
 painted :

———— on the walls old portraiture  
 Of horsemen, hawkes, and hounds,  
 And hurt deer, full of wounds,  
 Some like bitten, some hurt with shot.

(Chaucer's Dream, ad finem. fol. 343, ed. 1602.)

A modern reader may possibly not be aware that glass windows were so rare in the reign of Edward III., as to merit a particular description ; but it appears from Heywood's "Spider and Flie," that glazed windows were considered as a luxury in the time of Henry VIII. Heywood's window was only latticed. The Trojan war was indeed of little use, except as a provocative to dreaming, which Chaucer perhaps did not much want ; but, though an unnecessary, it must have been an expensive ornament.

In the Legend of Cleopatras we are surprised by the following description of the battle of Actium .

—— in the sea it happed *hem* to meet,  
 Up go'th the trump, and for to shout, and *shete* <sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Shoot.

And painen *hem* to set on with the sun.  
 With grisly sound out goeth the GREAT GUN :  
 And heartily they hurtlen in all at once ;  
 And fro the top down cometh the great stones.  
 In go'th the *grapenel*<sup>1</sup> so full of crooks,  
 Among the ropes ran the sheering hooks ;  
 In with the pole-ax presseth *he*<sup>2</sup> and *he* ;  
 Behind the mast beginneth *he* to flee ;

\* \* \* \* \*

*He* rent the sail with hookes like a scythe ;  
*He* bring'th the cup, and biddeth *hem* be blithe ;  
*He* poureth *pesen*<sup>3</sup> upon the hatches' slider,  
 With pottes full of lime, they gone together ;  
 And thus the longe day in fight they spend.

(Verse 56.)

In the Legend of Dido the situation of Æneas at her court is thus curiously described :

This Æneas is come to Paradise  
 Out of the swallow of hell : and thus in joy  
 Remembereth him of his estate in Troy.  
 To dancing chambers, full of *paraments*<sup>4</sup>,  
 Of riche beddes, and of *pávements*,  
 This Æneas is led after the meat.  
 And with the quene when that he had seat,  
 And spices parted, and the wine agone,  
 Unto his chamber was he led anon

<sup>1</sup> Grappling-iron. Fr.

<sup>2</sup> This.

<sup>3</sup> *Poir*, Fr. Pitch.

<sup>4</sup> *Parement*, Fr. ; from *parer*, to adorn.

To take his ease, and for to have his rest,  
With all his folk, to done whatso *hem* list.

There ne was courser well y-bridled none,  
Ne steede for the justing well to gone,  
Ne large palfrey, easy for the nonce,  
Ne jewel fret full of riche stones,  
Ne sakes full of gold of large weight,  
Ne ruby none that shineth by night,  
Ne *gentil hauten* falcon *heronere* <sup>1</sup>,  
Ne hound for herte, wilde boar, or deer,  
Ne cup of gold with florins new *y-bet* <sup>2</sup>  
That in the land of Libye may ben get,  
That Dido ne hath it Æneas y-sent :  
AND ALL IS PAYED, WHAT THAT HE HATH SPENT.  
Thus can this honourable queen her gwestes call,  
As she that can in freedom passen all.

(Verse 178, p. 190, ed. 1602.)

In the romance of Troilus and Creseide, Chaucer says—

And after this the story telleth us  
That she him gave the faire baye steed  
The which she *ones* <sup>3</sup> won of Troilus,  
And eke a *broche* <sup>4</sup> (and that was little need)  
That Troilus' was she gave this Diomedé ;

<sup>1</sup> *Gentil, hautain, heronier.* Fr.

<sup>2</sup> *Beaten, stamped, coined.*

<sup>3</sup> *Once.*

<sup>4</sup> *A clasp, or buckle ; any jewel.* Fr.

And eke the bet' from sorrow him to relieve,  
She made him wear a *pencil*<sup>1</sup> of her sleeve.

(B. V. st. 149, p. 179, ed. 1602.)

The attributes of chivalry and the fashions and customs of the middle ages do not, perhaps, sit very gracefully on classical characters; but we are glad to find them anywhere.

The following description of the entry of Troilus into Troy is inserted, because it seems to have suggested to Mr. Gray some very beautiful lines in his Latin epistle from Sophonisba to Massinissa; "*Jam flexi regale decus,*" &c. (Letter to Mr. West, May 27, 1742.)

This Troilus sat on his baye steed  
All armed, save his head, full richely,  
And wounded was his horse, and gan to bleed,  
On which he rode a pace full softly;  
But such a knightly sighte, truely,  
As was on him, was not withouten fail  
To look on Mars that god is of battayle.

So like a man of armes and a knight  
He was to seen, fulfill'd of high prowèss,  
For both he had a body, and [a] might  
To doen that thing, as well as hardiness;  
And eke to seen him in his geare dress,  
So fresh, so young, so wieldy seemed he,  
It was an heaven upon him for to see.

<sup>1</sup> A small streamer; *pennoncel*. Fr.

His helm to-hewen was in twenty places,  
That by a tissue hung his back behind,  
His shield to-dash'd with swordes and with maces,  
In whiche men might many an arrow find,  
That *thirled*<sup>1</sup> had both horne, nerve, and rind ;  
And aye the people cried " Here com'th our joy,  
And, next his brother, holder up of Troy."

For which he wex'd a little red for shame,  
When he so heard the people upon him cryen,  
That to behold it was a noble game  
How soberly he cast adown his eyen.  
Creseide anon gan all his cheer espyen,  
And let it so soft in her hearte sink.

(B. ii. st. 83, fol. 151, ed. 1602.)

The Romaunt of the Rose furnishes a great variety of beautiful descriptions ; but they have been frequently quoted, and are, probably, familiar to the reader, who will, perhaps, be better pleased with the following lines, containing advice on dress, and directed to the fine gentlemen of the fourteenth century.

And look alway that they be shape  
(What garment that thou shalt make)  
Of him that can best do ;  
With all that pertaineth thereto :

<sup>1</sup> *Pierced through.* Sax. Hence our *thrill*, and *drill*.

Pointes and sleeves be well sittand,  
 Right and streight on the hand :  
 Of shone and bootes, new and fair,  
 Look, at the least, thou have a pair,  
 And that they sit so *fetously* <sup>1</sup>  
 That these rude [men] may utterly  
 Marvel, *sith* that they sit so plain,  
 How they come on or off again,  
 Wear streighte gloves, with *aumere* <sup>2</sup>  
 Of silk ; and alway with good cheer  
 Thou give, if thou have richèss :  
 And if thou have nought, spend the less.  
 Alway be merry if thou may,  
 But waste not thy good alway.  
 Have hat of floures fresh as May ;  
 Chaplet of roses of Whitsunday ;  
 For such array ne costeth but *lite* <sup>3</sup>.  
 Thine handes wash, thy teeth make white,  
 And let no filth upon thee be.  
 Thy nailes black if thou may'st see,  
 Void it away *deliverly* <sup>4</sup>,  
 And *kembe* <sup>5</sup> thine head right jolily.  
 FARCE NOT THY VISAGE IN NO WISE <sup>6</sup> ;  
 For that of love is not th' *emprise* ;

<sup>1</sup> Neatly ; " foot it *featly*." Shakspeare.

<sup>2</sup> *Aumoniere*, purse.

<sup>3</sup> Little.

<sup>4</sup> Quickly.

<sup>5</sup> Comb.

<sup>6</sup> This seems to imply that even the gentlemen of Chaucer's time were addicted to painting.

For love doth haten, as I find,  
A beauty that cometh not of kind.  
(Rom. of the Rose, fol. 119, ed. 1602<sup>1</sup>.)

<sup>1</sup> The above extracts were in the first instance taken from Urry's edition, in which the measure is, doubtless, more uniformly smooth and harmonious than in the early printed copies. But this agreeable effect having been produced by unwarrantable interpolations, changes, and omissions (on account of which the credit of Mr. Urry's book has suffered in the opinion of all good judges), it has been thought better to revert to the black-letter editions. These, till some able English critic, following the example of the admirable Tyrwhitt in the *Canterbury Tales*, shall have actually reformed from a collation of MSS. the text of Chaucer's remaining works, can alone be safely trusted, rude and faulty as they may appear.



## CHAPTER IX.

*Same Period continued.*

JOHN BARBOUR.—REMARKS ON THE LANGUAGE OF SCOTLAND AT THIS PERIOD.—SKETCH OF THE BRUCE.—EXTRACTS FROM THAT POEM.

AT the same time with Chaucer flourished JOHN BARBOUR, archdeacon of Aberdeen. We learn from Wyn-town's Chronicle that he was author of a considerable historical work, which has not descended to posterity, called the *Brute*, comprising the whole genealogy of the kings of Scotland, probably compiled from Geoffrey of Monmouth, or translated from Wace. But he is only known to us by his biographical poem entitled *the Bruce*, containing a history of the life and reign of Robert I. It is divided, by its last editor, into twenty books, and consists of about 14,000 eight-syllable verses.

It has been already mentioned in the account of Robert de Brunne, that the "Thomas" whom he cites with so much praise, as author of the gest of Sir Tristrem, is conjectured by Mr. Tyrwhitt to be Thomas of Ercildoun; so that our ancestors appear to have been indebted to a Scottish poet for the earliest model of a pure English style. But, be this as it may, the very interesting poem now before us, the phraseology of which does not differ in any material point from that of Chaucer and his contemporaries, is a sufficient evidence that in our attempts to trace the history and mark the gradations of our language, we have been much too inattentive to the progress of that language amongst our northern neighbours.

The learned and ingenious editor of the "Poetical Remains of James the First" has endeavoured to account

for the identity of speech in the two countries by a reference to historical documents. He observes, that Malcolm III. (after the murder of his father Duncan) was rescued from the hands of Macbeth, and carried into England, to the court of Edward the Confessor, where he received his education; and was afterwards (1057) replaced on the throne of Scotland by means of an English army commanded by Siward, earl of Northumberland. Before this time, the residence of the kings of Scotland had been in the northern parts of the island; but Malcolm, soon after his restoration, removed his court to Dunfermline, on the north of the Forth; either with the view of being nearer to a country for which he had contracted a partiality, or, perhaps, for the purpose of securing himself, by the vicinity of his own subjects in Cumberland, in case any attempts might be made against him by the partizans of Macbeth in the north. Not long after this, Edgar Atheling, together with his mother and sister, and a number of their adherents, having been driven by a storm into the mouth of the Forth, were received with great kindness by Malcolm, who ultimately espoused the princess Margaret, and distributed grants of land among the Anglo-Saxon nobles who had accompanied her.

From these premises Mr. Tytler infers that Malcolm was the first cause of introducing into Scotland the Anglo-Saxon language, which he supposes to have been disseminated over the Lowlands, partly by means of these followers of Edgar Atheling, and partly by means of the intercourse which prevailed between the inhabitants of Scotland and those of the four northern counties of England, Cumberland, Northumberland, Westmoreland, and Durham, which were held by the kings of Scotland as fiefs of the crown of England.

This conjecture, however, does not seem to be perfectly satisfactory; nor are the causes in themselves

sufficient to have wholly changed the language of a country. If at the present moment the Celtic language prevailed over the whole of Scotland, instead of being confined to the Highlands, such a testimony would compel us to admit, either that the Saxons and Danes had been prevented by some unaccountable cause from attempting to form a settlement on the northern shores of this island, or that their attempts had been rendered abortive by the superior bravery and skill of the inhabitants. But, as the same Teutonic dialects are found to form the basis of the language both in England and in the Lowlands of Scotland, Mr. Hume has been induced, and apparently with great reason, to infer from this similarity of speech a similar series of successful invasions; although this success is not recorded by the historians of Scotland.

If this conclusion be admitted, it is evidently unnecessary to refer us to the much later period of Malcolm's reign; or to seek in his marriage with an English princess, in his distribution of lands among her followers, or in the policy which induced him to change his place of residence, for the establishment of a language which the Saxons and Danes could not fail of bringing with them; and which, if it had not been thus introduced, the inhabitants of the plains would probably have rejected as obstinately as those of the mountains. But the principal difficulty is to account for the introduction into Scotland, not of the Anglo-Saxon, or Danish, but of the *English* language; of that compound in which, as Mr. Tyrwhitt has justly observed, though the *scheme* and *formation* were in a great measure Saxon, a large proportion of the *elements* was French. In the dissemination of this the followers of Edgar Atheling were not likely to be instrumental, because, even if it had not been already formed in England, instead of being the result of their expulsion, they could not have wished to introduce into the country which

afforded them an asylum, a language which they must have considered as a badge of slavery. The phraseology of Barbour, of Wyntown, and of James I. (though certainly marked by many peculiarities of dialect), is not less Norman than that of their respective English contemporaries, Chaucer, Hoccleve, and Lydgate. In this case, neither the French schools, nor the French laws, nor any part of the tyrannical policy attributed to William the Conqueror, can have had any influence, because Scotland was never reduced under the Norman dominion.

As the influx of French words did not begin to produce a sensible change in the language of the English till the beginning, or perhaps the middle of the thirteenth century, its importation from thence into Scotland ought to be capable of being distinctly proved. We might expect, too, that as the successive improvements of the common language would pass by slow gradations from the original into the provincial idiom, the compositions of our native bards would be clearly distinguished by superiority of elegance, and that Barbour and Wyntown would, like their successors, avow their obligations to their English models. This, however, is not the case. Wyntown has preserved a short elegiac sonnet on the death of Alexander III. (1285), composed, as it should seem, by a contemporary bard, and far superior to any English song of that early date. It is as follows :

When Alexander our king was dead,  
That Scotland led in love and *lee*<sup>1</sup>,  
Away was *sons*<sup>2</sup> of ale and bread,  
Of wine and wax, of *gamyn* and glee :

<sup>1</sup> *Lie, liesse* ; joyous, joy. Old Fr.

<sup>2</sup> *Cens*. Fr. The gloss. of the Bann. Poems translates it *hospitality* : *cens* usually means *census*, tribute ; in some provinces it means *a farm*, or *small domain* ; here it seems to mean *abundance*, or, perhaps, *produce*.

Our gold was changed into lead.

Christ! born into virginity,  
Succour Scotland and remede,  
That *stad*<sup>1</sup> is in perplexity!

(Vol. i. p. 401.)

Neither Barbour nor Wyntown make mention of Chaucer or of any anterior English writer, though both are full of references to French authors, whom they seem to consider as perfectly familiar to their readers; and Barbour expressly terms his poem *a romance*, a proof that it was written on a French model.

Upon the whole, unless we suppose Scotland to have remained perfectly stationary during the progress of all their neighbours in civilization, it is scarcely probable, even if the intercourse with England had never existed, that they could have persevered in retaining without any change the very corrupted Anglo-Saxon dialect of the eleventh century, and which, from that very imperfection, was so susceptible of every necessary addition. If they proceeded to enrich it with new terms, it was natural that they, like the English, should borrow these from the Norman Romance, the most widely diffused and most cultivated language, excepting the Italian, of civilized Europe. It is also evident that, as the French and Scotch were very early united by interest and alliances, the progress of the new language would neither be retarded by that jealousy which the native English entertained of their conquerors, nor would it be checked by a struggle with the Norman, which was spoken at the courts of the English monarchs and of their nobles; whereas the dialect of the Scottish kings was the same with that of their subjects.

This at least may be inferred from the manner in which

<sup>1</sup> Placed. The noun (*stead*) still remains in English.

Wyntown notices the custom of Edward I., of addressing his hearers in French, and from the care with which he records his original words, and afterwards translates them for the benefit of his readers.

When Sir Anton the Bek had done  
His speak, the king him answered soon

*All intill Frankish, as used he,*

“Par le sang Dieu, vous avez chanté.”

“By Goddis blood,” he said, “ye sang :

So shall not all our gaming gang.”

(Vol. ii. p. 46. See also pages 76, 83, and 87, for similar instances.)

Would it be very absurd to suppose that our common language was separately formed in the two countries, and that it has owed its identity to its being constructed of similar materials, by similar gradations, and by nations in the same state of society? If this opinion should be thought very improbable, must we not, at least, admit that the migration of our language from England into Scotland has not yet been fully established, and that much remains for the investigation of future antiquaries?

To return to Barbour. “He seems to have been born,” says Mr. Pinkerton, “about the year 1326. In 1357, it appears, from a passport published by Rymer, dated the 13th day of August in that year, that he was then archdeacon of Aberdeen. This passport permits him to go to Oxford, there to place three scholars to pursue their studies and scholastic exercises. By a deed, dated the 13th of September in the same year, also published by Rymer, we find our author appointed by the bishop of Aberdeen, one of his commissioners to meet at Edinburgh concerning the ransom of David II. king of Scotland, then a prisoner in England. In 1365, Rymer gives us the title of another passport for John Barbour, archdeacon of Aberdeen, to go through England, with six knights in company, to St. Denis, near Paris. All we find further evidenced relating to our author is, that

he died aged, in the year 1396, as we learn from the chartulary of Aberdeen."

Barbour is to be considered in the double character of historian and poet. In the first, his authority is quoted by writers who immediately succeeded him as the most authentic that can be adduced; and Wyntown, in his "*Orygynale Cronikil*," either professedly transcribes, or refers to him, for the whole history of Bruce's reign. But the attentive reader will probably think the authenticity of his narrative better established by its own internal evidence than it can be by such external testimony. The series of events is not only related with as much attention to chronology as was compatible with any degree of connexion, or interest, but is strictly conformable to the known opinions and manners of the time, and clearly illustrates the principles of policy by which Edward I. endeavoured to keep possession of Scotland, and the system of tactics adopted by Bruce, for the purpose of weakening in detail a power which he was unable to combat when united.

It is well known that the Anglo-Saxons and Danes, though warlike nations, were very little versed in the art of constructing or attacking fortified places. William the Conqueror, therefore, had filled England with castles, which rendered the position of his forces impregnable; and Edward I. having over-run the whole low country of Scotland, adopted the same expedient, and appeared to be equally secure in his usurpation. Here the poem commences, and Barbour, contemplating the enslaved condition of his country, breaks out into the following animated lines on the blessings of liberty:

Ah! freedom is a noble thing!  
Freedom makes man to have liking!  
Freedom all solace to man gives!  
He lives at ease, that freely lives!

A noble heart may have none ease,  
*Na ellys* <sup>1</sup> nought that may him please,  
 If freedom fail : for free liking  
 Is *yearned* <sup>2</sup> o'er all other thing.  
*Na* he that aye has lived free  
 May not know well the property,  
 The anger, *na* the wretched doom  
 That is coupled to foul thraldòm.  
 But, if he had essayed it,  
 Then all *perquer* <sup>3</sup> he should it *wit*,  
 And should think freedom more to prize  
 Than all the gold in world that is.  
 Thus contrary things evermare  
 Discoverings of the tother are.

(B. i. ver. 225.)

The misfortunes which attended Bruce during the first years of his reign are well known, but Barbour's minute details give them a new interest. While his hero is wandering among the mountains after the fatal defeat of Methven, indebted to the ever-inventive genius of Sir James Douglas for the scanty supply of game and fish which was barely sufficient for the subsistence of his new adherents ;—obliged to separate himself from his queen and family, to traverse the whole country as an outlaw, and to seek an asylum in the unfrequented island of Ruchrin ;—his biographer gives a circumstantial detail of his daily difficulties, of his paternal solicitude for his little army, of his personal exploits, and of the patience with which he submitted to more than a soldier's share in the common hardships.

<sup>1</sup> Nor else.

<sup>2</sup> Eagerly desired.

<sup>3</sup> Perfectly ; *parcœur* ?



In this desperate situation he was relieved from utter ruin by the death of his formidable antagonist Edward I., and the supineness of his successor. But Bruce had already faced his enemies, had formed the plan which he never afterwards abandoned, and had trained his followers to a mode of warfare which could scarcely fail of success. Always watchful, enterprising, and invisible, he fell upon the straggling parties of his enemies by rapid and unexpected marches, and easily eluded a contest with disproportionate forces, in a country with which he was intimately acquainted, but where they were under the necessity of trusting to unexperienced or faithless guides. Though often on the brink of ruin, though actually hunted by blood-hounds, he never despaired. Success gave him new friends, his conciliating manners preserved the old; fort after fort was surprised, or reduced to surrender, and was immediately dismantled, because he was sure of a retreat in his native mountains; whereas the defeats of his enemies became irretrievable.

It was in these circumstances, and when the whole of Scotland was cleared of his enemies, that he ventured his crown and life in the decisive battle of Bannock-burn, which crushed the whole army, and nearly the courage, of the English. This battle, on which Barbour naturally dwells with considerable exultation, occupies two books, the twelfth and thirteenth; and the remaining seven contain the exploits of Edward Bruce in Ireland; the several predatory incursions into England, which were undertaken by Douglas, Murray, and other leaders; the death of Douglas in Spain; and all the remaining incidents of Robert Bruce's reign.

In describing the campaign in Ireland, in which the king had marched an army to the assistance of his brother, Barbour suddenly stops to relate an anecdote which a monkish historian would probably have thought beneath

the dignity of history ; but the simple and affectionate heart of our poet would have prompted him to risk a much greater indecorum for the purpose of illustrating the humane character of his hero. The king was at this time preparing to return with his army from the south of Ireland towards Carrickfergus.

And when that they all ready were,  
 The king has heard a woman cry ;  
 He asked what that was *in hy* <sup>1</sup>.  
 " It is the *layndar* <sup>2</sup>, sir," said *ane*,  
 " That her *child-ill* right now has tane :  
 And *mon* leave now behind us here ;  
 Therefore she makes yon evil cheer."  
 The king said, " Certs, it were pity  
 That she in that point left should be ;  
 For certs, I trow there is no man  
 That he ne will rue a woman *than*."  
 His host all there arrested he,  
 And *gert* <sup>3</sup> a tent soon *stinted* <sup>4</sup> be ;  
 And *gert* her gang in hastily,  
 And other women to be her by.  
 While she was delivered, he *bade*,  
 And *syne* forth on his wayis *rade*,  
 And, how she forth should carried be,  
 Or ever he forth *fur* <sup>5</sup>, ordained he.

<sup>1</sup> In haste.

<sup>2</sup> *Layndar*, or *lavender*, a laundress, washer-woman. *Lavendière*, Fr.

<sup>3</sup> Caused.

<sup>4</sup> Stretched.

<sup>5</sup> Fared.

This was a full great courtesy !  
That *swilk* a king and so mighty  
Gert his men dwell on this mannèr  
But for a poor *lavender* !

(B. xvi. ver. 270.)

This little incident, and innumerable details contained in Barbour's narrative, show that it must have been very principally compiled from the relations of eye-witnesses. Hence the variety in his descriptions of battles, which are as much diversified as the scenery of the country where they were fought. But a soldier will sometimes exaggerate the exploits of a leader in whose glory he participates ; and Barbour was occasionally in a very awkward dilemma between his love of veracity and his fear of depreciating the value of a hero to whom, in his own opinion, no efforts were impossible. Of this there is a curious instance in the beginning of the sixth Book, where Bruce singly discomfits a body of two hundred men of Galloway, of whom he kills fourteen. Barbour seems to have hesitated ; but fortunately his learning comes in aid of his propensity : he recollects a parallel instance in the history of Thebes, relates it much at length, and thus silences all his scruples : those of his readers probably would have been still more easily satisfied.

Barbour's poetical character cannot be more correctly described than in the words of his editor. "Here indeed," says Mr. Pinkerton, "the reader will find few of the graces of fine poetry, little of the Attic dress of the Muse ; but here are life, and spirit, and ease, and plain sense, and pictures of real manners, and perpetual incident, and entertainment. The language is remarkably good for the time ; and far superior, in neatness and ele-

gance, even to that of Gawin Douglas, who wrote more than a century after."

The following extract from the Bruce is selected, not as giving the most brilliant specimen of Barbour's poetical talent, but as forming a distinct episode, and consequently possessing an independent interest; and because it is sufficiently long to afford a fair estimate of the poet's general style and language, and is an example of the fashionable mode of argument in that story-telling age, when apologue was necessary even in the eloquence of the pulpit, and employed in the discussion of the fate of armies and of empires.

Douglas is represented as dissuading Murray from hazarding a battle against the superior forces of Edward III.

The Lord Douglas said, "By Saint Bride,  
It were great folly at this tide  
*Till* us with *swilk* an host to fight :  
It growis, *ilka* day, of might,  
And has victual therewith plenty;  
And in their country here are we,  
Where there may come us no succours;  
Hard is to make us here *rescours*<sup>1</sup>;  
*Na* we us may *ferrar*<sup>2</sup> meat to get :  
*Swilk* as we have here we *mon* eat.  
Do we with our foes therefore,  
That are here *lyand* us before,  
As *ich* heard tell this other year  
That a fox did with a fishèr."

<sup>1</sup> Rescue. Fr.

<sup>2</sup> Farther.

"How did the fox?" the earl gan say.  
 He said, "A fisher whilom lay  
 Besides a river, for to get  
 His nets that he had therin set.  
 A little lodge thereby he made;  
 And there-within a bed he had,  
 And a little fire alsò.  
 A door there was, *foroutyn*<sup>1</sup> mo.  
 A night, his nettis for to see,  
 He rose; and there well long dwelt he.  
 And when he had done his deed,  
 Toward his lodge again he *yeid*<sup>2</sup>;  
 And, with light of the little fire,  
 That in the lodge was *brynand*<sup>3</sup> *schyr*<sup>4</sup>,  
 Intill his lodge a fox he saw,  
 That fast on a salmon gan gnaw.  
 Then *till* the door he went in *hy*,  
 And drew his sword *deliverly*:  
 And said, '*Reiffar*<sup>5</sup>! you *mon* here out!'  
 The fox, that was in full great doubt,  
 Looked about, some hole to see;  
 But none issùe perceive *couth* he,  
 But where the man stood sturdily.  
 A *lauchtane*<sup>6</sup> mantle then him by

<sup>1</sup> Without.<sup>2</sup> Went, hied.<sup>3</sup> Burning.<sup>4</sup> Clear. Anglo-Sax., *seyre*.<sup>5</sup> Be-reaver, reaver, robber.

<sup>6</sup> Mr. Pinkerton is unable to explain this word. Query, if it be *Louthian*, the place where it was manufactured, or where such mantles were usually worn?

*Lyand* upon the bed he saw ;  
 And with his teeth he gan it draw  
 Outo'er the fire : and when the man  
 Saw his mantle lye *brymand than*,  
 To rid it ran he hastily.  
 The fox got out then in great *hy*,  
 And held his way his *warrand* <sup>1</sup> *till*.  
 The man let him beguiled ill,  
 That he his good salmòn had *tynt* <sup>2</sup>,  
 And also had his mantle *brynt* <sup>3</sup> ;  
 And the fox *scaithless* <sup>4</sup> got away.  
 This ensample well I may say  
 By yon host and us that are here :  
 We are the fox ; and they the fishèr,  
 That *steke* <sup>5</sup> *forouth* <sup>6</sup> us the way.  
 They ween we may *na* get away,  
 But right where they lie. But, pardie,  
 All as they think it shall not be ;  
 For I have *gert* see us a *gate* <sup>7</sup>  
 (Suppose that it be some deal wet)  
 A page of ours we shall not *tyne* <sup>8</sup>.  
 Our foes, for this small *truantine* <sup>9</sup>,

<sup>1</sup> Place of security. *Garant*, Fr. Warrant, warren. Eng.

<sup>2</sup> Lost.

<sup>3</sup> Burnt ; in old English, *brent*. The place of the vowel in such words was, during a long period, undetermined.

<sup>4</sup> Without harm.

<sup>5</sup> Bars, shuts.

<sup>6</sup> Before.

<sup>7</sup> Way.

<sup>8</sup> Lose.

<sup>9</sup> Wandering. Fr. It seems to mean, "Our foes hope that, to avoid *this little circuit*, we shall be so proud as to give them battle."

Meanis well we shall pride us *swa*<sup>1</sup>  
 That we plainly on hand shall *tá*<sup>2</sup>  
 To give them openly bataill :  
 But at this time their thought shall fail.  
 For we tomorn here all the day  
 Shall make us merry as we may ;  
 And make us boon again the night ;  
 And then *ger* make our fires light,  
 And blow our hornys, and make fare  
 As all the world our owne were,  
*While* that the night well fallen be ;  
 And then, with all our harness, we  
 Shall take our way homeward in *ky*.  
 And we shall *gyit*<sup>3</sup> be *graithly*<sup>4</sup>,  
*While* we be out of their dangere  
 That lyes now enclosed here.  
 Then shall we all be at our will :  
 And they shall let them trumpet ill,  
*Fra* they *wyt* well we be away."  
 To this wholly assented they.

(B. xix. ver. 635.)

The story here told by Douglas has every appearance of being a French fabliau : and Barbour has unquestionably borrowed from the same language the romance of *Fierabras*, which the king relates to his followers during their tedious passage of Loch Lomond. (See Book iii. v. 435. edit. 1790.) It is not transcribed here, because it is

<sup>1</sup> So.

<sup>2</sup> Take.

<sup>3</sup> Guised.

<sup>4</sup> Cautiously?

unnecessary to multiply extracts from a work which is so easily attainable : it might, indeed, be proper to apologize for the length of the foregoing specimen, but that the capricious and obsolete orthography of the ancient MS., to which Mr. Pinkerton assures us he has (with great propriety) scrupulously adhered, may possibly have deterred many readers from attempting to peruse this very curious and entertaining historical poem.



## CHAPTER X.

*Reign of Henry IV. (1399 to 1413.)*

ANDREW OF WYNTOWN.—EXTRACTS FROM HIS CHRONICLE  
OF SCOTLAND.—THOMAS HOCCKLEVE.—ANONYMOUS  
ENGLISH POETRY.

ANDREW OF WYNTOWN claims a place in our catalogue of English poets in consequence of having written, in tolerable eight-syllable verse, and in very pure language, his "*Orygynale Cronykil of Scotland*" from the creation of the world to the year 1408. This is a very curious work, of which a most sumptuous and apparently correct edition (in 2 vols. large 8vo), from a comparison of the best MSS., has lately (1795) been given to the public by Mr. Macpherson, together with a list of various readings, many valuable historical notes, a copious index, and a most useful glossary.

All the information that the learned editor has been able to collect respecting his author amounts to this: that Andrew of Wyntown was a canon regular of the priory of St. Andrew's, and that, in or before the year 1395, he was, by the favour of his fellow-canons, elected prior of the monastery of St. Serf's island, in Loch-Levin, one of the most ancient religious establishments in Scotland. As he was not likely to be chosen for such an office in very early youth, and as he complains much of the infirmities of age while occupied in his Chronicle, which appears from internal evidence to have been finished between the years 1420 and 1424, he was probably born not long after the middle of the fourteenth century.

With respect to his poetical talents, the opinion of his editor is, that "though his work in general partakes little or nothing of the nature of poetry, unless rhyme can be said to constitute poetry, yet he now and then throws in some touches of true poetic description." This, indeed, seems to be as much as can be fairly expected from a metrical annalist; for dates and numerals are of necessity unpoetical; and, perhaps, the ablest modern versifier who should undertake to enumerate in metre the years of our Lord in only one century would feel some respect for the ingenuity with which Wyntown has contrived to vary his rhymes throughout such a formidable chronological series as he has ventured to encounter. His genius is certainly inferior to that of his predecessor, Barbour: but, at least, his versification is easy, his language pure, and his style often animated. As an historian, he is highly valuable; but, perhaps, it may be more amusing to the reader to examine him both as a narrator and as a poet in the early and nearly fabulous part of his work, for which purpose some extracts are here selected from his history of Macbeth.

It is well known that Shakspeare's immediate model was Holinshed, who abridged the work of Bellenden, translated from the Latin of Boyse. Wyntown's narrative is in some respects very different, and, in one instance at least, is much more dramatic.

This author gives the following as the popular and fabulous account of Macbeth's parentage:

But, as we find by some storîes,  
 Gotten he was *on*<sup>1</sup> *ferly*<sup>2</sup> wise.  
 His mother to woods made oft repair  
 For the delight of wholesome air.

<sup>1</sup> In.

<sup>2</sup> Wonderful.

So she past upon a day  
*Til* a wood, her for to play ;  
 She met *of case*<sup>1</sup> with a fair man  
 (Ne'er none so fair as she thought *than*  
 Before then had she seen with sight,)  
 Of beauty pleasant, and of height  
 Proportion'd well, in all measure,  
 Of limb and *lyth*<sup>2</sup> a fair figure.  
 In *swilk* acquaintance so they fell,  
 That, thereof shortly for to tell,—  
 (Vol. i. p. 227.)

The reader certainly has foreseen that this very beautiful man was no other than the devil, who became the father of Macbeth, as he had, some centuries before, become the father of Merlin ; and who presented to his paramour a ring, in token that their future son should be a great man, and that—

“ No man should be born of wife  
 Of power to 'reave him his life.”

Macbeth's ambition is excited, not by actually meeting the weird sisters, but by a dream :

*A night*<sup>3</sup> he thought in his dreaming  
 That *sittand*<sup>4</sup> he was beside the king  
 At a seat in hunting : so  
*Intil* his leash had grey-hounds two.

<sup>1</sup> By chance ; *per cas.* Fr.

<sup>2</sup> Joint ; *liða neaso.* Goth.

<sup>3</sup> i. e. one night.

<sup>4</sup> Sitting : *and* is the old Saxon as well as French termination of the participle.

He thought, while he was so *sittànd*,  
 He saw three women by *gangànd* <sup>1</sup> ;  
 And *they* <sup>2</sup> women then thought he  
 Three weird sisters most like to be.  
 The first he heard say, *gangand* by,  
 "Lo ! yonder the thane of Crumbauchty !"  
 The 'tother woman said again,  
 "Of Moray yonder I see the thane."  
 The third then said, "I see the king."  
 All this he heard in his dreamìng.  
 Soon after that, in his youth-head,  
 Of *thyr* <sup>3</sup> thanedoms he thane was made ;  
*Syne* next he thought to be king,  
*Fra* <sup>4</sup> Duncan's days had ta'en ending.  
 The fantasy thus of his dream  
 Moved him most to slay his *eme* <sup>5</sup> ,  
 As he did all forth indeed,  
 As before he heard me *rede*,  
 And dame Gruok his *eme's* wife  
 Took, and led with her his life,  
 And held her both his wife and queen.

(Vol. i. p. 225.)

The story of Lady Macbeth, therefore, seems to have been afterwards added. Duncan's two legitimate sons and Malcolm (who it seems was illegitimate) fly to Eng-

<sup>1</sup> Going.

<sup>2</sup> These, or those : in the original *thai*.

<sup>3</sup> These.

<sup>4</sup> From ; from the time when ; as soon as.

<sup>5</sup> Uncle. Anglo-Sax.

land : but the enmity between the usurper and Macduff has a separate origin.

Macbeth, according to Wyntown, meaning to fortify the hill at Dunsinnane, pressed all the teams in the neighbourhood, and having observed some oxen, the property of Macduff, to fail in their work, he threatened "despiciously" to put Macduff's own neck into the yoke. The subsequent conduct of the thane of Fife is thus minutely and curiously related :

*Fra* the thane Macbeth heard speak  
 That he would put in yoke his neck,  
 Of all his thought he made no song ;  
 But privily out of the throng  
 With slight he got ; and the *spensere* <sup>1</sup>  
 A loaf him gave *till* his suppere.  
 And, as soon as he might see  
 His time and opportunity,  
 Out of the court he past, and ran,  
 And that loaf bare with him *than*  
 To the water of Erin. That bread  
 He gave the boat-wards, him to lead,  
 And on the south half him to set  
*But* <sup>2</sup> delay or any let.  
 That passage call'd was after *than*  
 Long time PORT NEBARYAN ;  
 The HAVEN OF BREAD that should be  
 Called *in-tyl* property.

(Vol. i. p. 230.)

<sup>1</sup> *Le dispensier* ; the dispenser of provisions.  
 Without ; be-out. Sax.

Then follows a fine Gothic incident. Macduff, aware that his flight would be discovered, and that he should be immediately pursued, passes through Fife to his strong castle of Kennauchy, and then proceeds to hasten the march of the English forces ; having first apprised his wife of his intention, and directed her to " hold Macbeth in fair treaty " till she should discover a boat sailing to the southward ; at sight of which she should inform the king that his enemy was escaped to England, but would speedily meet him in arms at Dunsinnane.

*Til* Kennauchy Macbeth came soon,  
 And *felny* <sup>1</sup> gréat there would been done ;  
 But this lady with fair treaty  
 His purpose *letted* <sup>2</sup> done to be.  
 And soon, *fra* she the sail up saw  
 Then *til* Macbeth with little awe  
 She said, " Macbeth look up, and see,  
 Under yon sail forsooth is he,  
 The thane of Fife whom thou hast sought.  
 Trow thou well, and doubt right nought,  
 If ever thou shall see him again,  
 He shall thee set *intil* great pain ;  
*Syne* thou would have put his neck  
*Intil* the yoke. Now will I speak  
 With thee no more : fare on thy way,  
 Either well, or ill, as happen may." (P. 232.)

Had Shakspeare met with this spirited scene, he would probably have been glad to contrast the heroine of Fife

<sup>1</sup> *Felonie*, Fr.; cruelty.

<sup>2</sup> Prevented.

with the ferocious Lady Macbeth, as well as to have saved the miserable contrivance of sending three murderers to destroy the wife and children of a powerful thane in a fortified and garrisoned castle.

The conversation between Malcolm and Macduff, (Shakspeare, Act iv. scene 1), and the incident of Birnam wood, are told nearly in the same way by Holinshed and Wynthown : only the death of Macbeth is attributed not to Macduff, but to a certain knight, who had been brought into the world by means of the Cæsarean operation.

The *flyttand*<sup>1</sup> wood they called aye  
 That, long time after-hand that day.  
 Of this when he had seen that sight,  
 He was right wo, and took the flight :  
 And o'er the *Mount*<sup>2</sup> they chas'd him *than*  
*Til* the wood of Lunfanan.  
 This Macduff was there most fell,  
 And on that chace then most *cruèl*<sup>3</sup>.  
 But a knight, that in that chace  
*Til* this Macbeth then nearest was,  
 Macbeth turned him *again*,  
 And said, "*Lurdane*<sup>4</sup>, thou pricks in vain :  
 For thou may nought be he, I trow,  
 That to *dead* shall slay me now.  
 That man is not born of wife  
 Of power to reave me of my life."

<sup>1</sup> Moving.

<sup>2</sup> The hill, i. e. the mountains now commonly called the Grampians.

<sup>3</sup> Keen, steady.

<sup>4</sup> Clumsy fellow; *lourdaine*. Old Fr.

The knight said, "I was never born,  
But of my mother's womb was shorn.  
Now shall thy treason here take end,  
For *to thy father* I shall thee send."

(P. 239.)

The last line seems to contain an allusion to Macbeth's supposed birth, and to be a return for the injurious appellation of *hurdane*.

Wyntown, in his account of king Arthur, mentions, among the historians of his *gests*, an author who is totally unknown to our poetical antiquaries. He calls him "HUCHOWN OF THE AWLE RYALE," and tells us that

He made the great gest of Arthure,  
And the aventure of Gawane;  
The 'pistle *als* of sweet Susane.

(Vol. i. p. 122.)

Mr. Macpherson seems to think that Huchown (Hugh) may be the Christian name of *the Clerk of Tranent*,

"That made the adventures of Sir Gawane<sup>1</sup>."

(Dunbar's Lament, Bannatyne Poems, p. 76.)

But perhaps he was the author of the Norman original, and Wyntown's anxiety to establish the authenticity of his narrative may be explained by his general fondness for exploits of chivalry, a subject on which he always dwells with pleasure.

The love of tournaments, indeed, seems to have been carried almost to madness in Scotland, as well as in England, before the general adoption of fire-arms; as will

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Pinkerton, in the "Preliminaries" to his "Scottish Poems," (p. xxxv. note,) suggests, "that this poet is Sir Hew of Eglinton, mentioned by Dunbar as preceding Winton in time."



appear from Wyntown's account of these exhibitions at Berwick, about the year 1338. But we must first exhibit the state of the country at the time of this festivity.

About Perth then was the country  
 So waste, that wonder was to see ;  
 For *intil* well great space thereby  
 Was neither house left, *na herbrý*<sup>1</sup>.  
 Of deer there was then *swilk foyssown*<sup>2</sup>  
 That they would near come to the town.  
 So great default was near that *stead*,  
 That many were in hunger dead.

A carl, they said, was near thereby,  
 That would set *settys*<sup>3</sup> commonly  
 Children and women for to *sla*<sup>4</sup>,  
 And swains that he might *over-ta*<sup>5</sup>,  
 And eat them all that he get might ;  
 Christian Klek *tyl* name he *hight*<sup>6</sup>.  
 That sorry life continued he  
 While waste, *but*<sup>7</sup> folk, was the country.

(Vol. ii. p. 236.)

Such were the consequences of war in the rich neighbourhood of Perth ; and the "Forest," the scene of Douglas's exploits, and the environs of Berwick, were not likely to be much better cultivated, when Sir Henry of Lancaster, earl of Derby, impatient of the inactivity attendant on a truce, repaired to the frontiers to request

<sup>1</sup> Harbour, lodging ; *Herbenger*. Fr.

<sup>2</sup> Plenty. Fr.

<sup>3</sup> Traps.

<sup>4</sup> Slay.

<sup>5</sup> Overtake.

<sup>6</sup> Was called.

<sup>7</sup> Without.

of Douglas "three courses of war." This justing, though it ended without bloodshed, was so satisfactory to all parties, that it produced a second, in which twenty combatants appeared on a side.

Upon the morn, when that *they*<sup>1</sup> were  
*Makand* them *boon*<sup>2</sup>, *himself*<sup>3</sup> came there,  
 And found all open the entry;  
 And, *nought-forthy*<sup>4</sup>, there knocked he,  
 Without the door all privily;  
 While Ramsay *til* him came in *hy*  
 And *gert* him enter. Soon then he  
 Said, "God *mot* at your liking be!"  
*Syne* said he, "Lords, on what mannere  
 Will ye run at this justing here?"  
 "With plate shieldis," said Ramsay,  
 As it *affairs*<sup>5</sup> to this play."  
 "Ah siris, by our Lord," said he,  
 So should no man here prized be,  
 For none *til* other might do ill:  
 But, *and*<sup>6</sup> it *likand* were you *til*  
 As men *hostayis*<sup>7</sup> for to *ryn*<sup>8</sup>,  
 So might men price of worship win."  
 Quod Alexander the Ramsay,  
 "It shall like *til* us all, parfay,

<sup>1</sup> The Scotch knights.

<sup>2</sup> The earl of Derby.

<sup>3</sup> Belongs; *affairs*, Original.

<sup>4</sup> Enemies?

<sup>5</sup> Ready.

<sup>6</sup> Nevertheless.

<sup>7</sup> If.

<sup>8</sup> Run.

That *ilk* man *ryn* his fellow *til*  
 In *kirtle* <sup>1</sup> alone, if that ye will."  
 The earl said then debonairly,  
 "Nay, that is all too hard truly."  
 Quod William of the Towers *than*,  
 "Sir, *gyve* ye *na* will let *ilk* man  
*Ryn* all bare visàge, and ye  
 Who eschews first right soon shall see."  
 The earl said meekly, "Siris, nay,  
 Yet that is all too hard, parfay :  
 But, as I said you, will ye do ?  
 There should some price follow us to."  
 Thereto they all gave their consent,  
 And he forth *til* his fellows went.

(Vol. ii. p. 221.)

This tournament, the description of which occupies about a hundred lines, must have been very magnificent, for two English knights were killed, one of the Scottish knights died of his wounds, and another, Sir William the Ramsay, had his head pierced with a spear, so that a priest was sent for to receive his confession, which he gave without taking off his helmet ; a circumstance which "the good earl of Derby" considered as so very agreeable, that he exclaimed—

I would God of his grace would send  
 To me on *swilk* manere to end !

(P. 223.)

But the preceding extract was transcribed chiefly because it gives such a minute description of the ceremonies

<sup>1</sup> Under-garment ; tunic. Anglo-Sax.

which constituted the politeness or "courtesy" of our ancestors. The Scottish knights, we see, kept their door constantly open, but Lord Derby was too great a proficient in civility to enter without an express invitation. The open door, it seems, was indispensable on such occasions, as being a symbol of knightly hospitality ; and for this reason it is carefully noted by our author on another occasion. In 1408, the Earl of Mar passed over into France—

With a noble company  
Well array'd and daintily,  
Knights and squires, great gentlemen, &c.

\* \* \* \* \*

In Paris he held a royal state,  
At the sign known the Tin-plate ;  
All the time that he was there  
*Bidand*<sup>1</sup>, twelve weeks full and *mare*.

DOOR AND GATE BOTH GERT HE  
AYE STAND OPEN, that men might *se*<sup>2</sup>  
Enter all time at, their pleasànce,  
*Til* eat or drink, or sing or dance.  
Of all nations generally  
Commended he was *greatumly*  
Of wit, virtue, and largèss.

(Vol. ii. p. 424.)

Many more particulars respecting tournaments may be found in the account of Sir David Lindsay's duel with "the Lord of the Wellis," (Vol. ii. p. 353,) and in other parts of the work.

<sup>1</sup> Abiding, dwelling.

<sup>2</sup> So.

Upon the whole, Wyntown's Chronicle is certainly a valuable acquisition to our stock of early literature. It is a curious specimen of language and poetry, and contains much information for the historical antiquary. The more indolent reader will perhaps be amused to observe the instances of our holy prior's credulity: as, for instance, the miracles related to St. Serf (Vol. i. p. 130); a still more singular miracle (i. 152); the story of Pope Joan (i. 165); the tales in the thirteenth chapter of book vi. (i. 194); and the story of Matilda, wife of our Henry I., which is usually applied to the Lady Godiva (ii. 50). This credulity, however, was the characteristic of the age rather than of the writer: and a knowledge of the opinions and prejudices of mankind is always a necessary comment on their actions. From a want of this knowledge, which no ingenuity can bestow, and which, from the scantiness of original materials, no diligence can acquire, our modern surveys of history are always to a certain degree inspid. The distance from which we view the scene of action is too great; the principal groups may remain, but the features and countenances vanish. Those, therefore, who are so inquisitive as to wish for the portraits of the actors must consult the gossiping histories of contemporary writers; must associate with Froissart and Wyntown, submit to the punctilio and formality of the times, and listen to long stories with complacency and patience.

Of Wyntown's English contemporaries there is only one whose name has descended to posterity. This is THOMAS OCCLEVE, or HOCCEVE, "a feeble writer," says Mr. Warton, "considered as a poet: and his chief merit seems to be, that his writings contributed to propagate and establish those improvements in our language, which were now beginning to take place. He was educated in the municipal law, as were both Chaucer and Gower; and it reflects no small degree of honour on that very

liberal profession, that its students were some of the first who attempted to polish and adorn the English tongue."

Since the publication of Mr. Warton's history, a selection from Hoccleve's poems has been printed by Mr. Mason, and has proved the justice of the foregoing criticism. The most favourable specimen of Hoccleve's poetry is his *Story of Jonathas*, which the reader will find in the "Shepherd's Pipe," by William Browne, author of *Britannia's Pastorals*.

As it is not easy to select a tolerable extract from this writer, I shall here insert two specimens of contemporary though anonymous poetry, both of which possess considerable merit. The first is taken from Mr. Ritson's very curious collection of Ancient Songs, p. 44.

*"Again my will I take my leave."*

Now *Bairnes buirdes* <sup>1</sup>, bold and blithe,

To blessen you here now am I bound;

I thank you all a thousand *sithe* <sup>2</sup>,

And pray God save you whole and sound.

Where'er ye go, on grass or ground,

He you govern withouten *greve* <sup>3</sup>!

For friendship that I here have found,

Again my will I take my leave.

For friendship, and for giftes good,

For meat and drink so great plenty,

<sup>1</sup> *Bairns* are gentlemen, barons; *buird*, *bird*, or *bride*, is a common name for young women: but perhaps the word in this place may be an abbreviation of *brydest*. Sax. most noble.

<sup>2</sup> Times.

<sup>3</sup> Grief.

That Lord that *raught*<sup>1</sup> was on the *rood*<sup>2</sup>,  
 He keep this comely company :  
 On sea or land, where that ye be,  
 He govern you withouten *greve* ;  
 So good disport ye *han*<sup>3</sup> made me,  
 Again my will I take my leave.

Again my will although I wend,  
 I may not alway dwellen here :  
 For every thing shall have an end,  
 And friendes are not aye *y-fere*<sup>4</sup>.  
 Be we never so lief and dear,  
 Out of this world all shall we *meve*<sup>5</sup> ;  
 And when we *busk*<sup>6</sup> unto our bier  
 Again our will we take our leave.

And wend we shall : I wot ne'er when,  
 Ne whither-ward that we shall fare :  
 But endless bliss, or aye to *bren*<sup>7</sup>,  
 To every man is *yarked yare*<sup>8</sup>.  
 For this, I *rede*<sup>9</sup>, each man beware ;  
 And let our work our wordes *preve*<sup>10</sup>,  
 So that no sin our soul *forfare*<sup>11</sup>  
 When that our life hath taken his leave.

<sup>1</sup> Stretched.<sup>2</sup> Have.<sup>3</sup> Move, remove.<sup>4</sup> Burn.<sup>5</sup> Advise.<sup>6</sup> Forfeit, lose, destroy.<sup>7</sup> Cross.<sup>8</sup> Together.<sup>9</sup> Go.<sup>10</sup> Prepared, ready.<sup>11</sup> Prove.

When that our life his leave hath *lauht* <sup>1</sup>,  
 Our body lieth bounden by the *wowe* <sup>2</sup>,  
 Our riches all from us be *raft*,  
 In clottes could our corse is throw.  
 Where are thy friends ? who will thee know ?  
 Let see who will thy soul relieve ?  
 I *rede* thee, man, ere thou lie low,  
 Be ready aye to take thy leave.

Be ready aye, whate'er befall,  
 All suddenly lest thou be *kiht* <sup>3</sup> :  
 Thou *wost* <sup>4</sup> ne'er when thy Lord will call ;  
 Look that thy lamp be *brenning* bright.  
 For '*leve* <sup>5</sup> me well, *but* thou have light,  
 Right foul thy Lord will thee *repreve*,  
 And *fleme* <sup>6</sup> thee far out of his sight,  
 For all too late thou took thy leave.

Now God that was in Bethlem *bore* <sup>7</sup>,  
 He give us grace to serve him so,  
 That we may come his face *to-fore* <sup>8</sup>,  
 Out of this world when we shall go ;

<sup>1</sup> Left, i. e. taken.

<sup>2</sup> *Wowe*, is care, misery, &c. ; but the construction is by no means clear.

<sup>3</sup> Caught.

<sup>4</sup> Knowest.

<sup>5</sup> Believe.

<sup>6</sup> Banish. Sax.

<sup>7</sup> Born.

<sup>8</sup> Before.



And for to amend that we mis-do,  
 In clay *or* that we cling and cleave;  
 And make us even with friend and foe,  
 And in good time to take our leave.

Now haveth good day, good men all,  
 Haveth good day, both great and small,  
 Haveth good day, both great and small,  
 And *graunt-merci*<sup>1</sup> a thousand fold!  
*Gif*<sup>2</sup> ever I might, full fain I wold  
*Don*<sup>3</sup> ought that were unto you *leve*<sup>4</sup>.  
 Christ keep you out of cares cold!  
 For now is time to take my leave.

The second poem is of a very different cast: it is a transcript from the Cotton MS. Galb. E. ix., "Perhaps," says Mr. Warton, (iii. p. 93,) "coeval with Chaucer, which describes the power of money with great humour, and in no common vein of satire."

*Incipit Narratio de Domino Denario.*

In earth it is a little thing,  
 And reigns *als* a riche king,  
 Where he is lent in land:  
 SIR PENNY is his name call'd:  
 He makes both young and ald  
 Bow *untill* his hand.

<sup>1</sup> *Grand-merci*, Fr. grammercy, thanks.

<sup>2</sup> Doen, do.

<sup>3</sup> If.

<sup>4</sup> *Lief* agreeable.

Popes, kings, and emperours,  
 Bishops, abbots, and priours,  
     Parson, priest, and knight,  
 Dukes, earls, and *ilk* baroun,  
 To serve him they are full *boon* <sup>1</sup>  
     Both by day and night.

Sir Penny changes manes mood,  
 And *gars* <sup>2</sup> them oft do down their hood,  
     And to rise *him* again <sup>3</sup> :  
 Men honours him with great reverènce,  
 Makes full mickle obedience  
     Unto that little swain.

In kinges court is it no boot  
 Against Sir Penny for to *moot* <sup>4</sup> ;  
     So mickle is he of might :  
 He is so witty and so strong,  
 That be it never so mickle wrong,  
     He will make it right.

With Penny may men women *till* <sup>5</sup>,  
 Be they never so strange of will ;

<sup>1</sup> Boon, ready.

<sup>2</sup> Against, before him.

<sup>5</sup> Approach, gain.

<sup>3</sup> Causes.

<sup>4</sup> Plead.

So oft may it be seen :  
Long with him will they not chide,  
For he may *ger* them *trail side* <sup>1</sup>  
In good scarlet and green.

He may buy both heaven and hell,  
And *ilka* thing that is to sell,  
In earth has he *swilk* grace :  
He may *lese*, and he may bind,  
The poor are aye put behind  
Where he comes in place.

When he begins him to *mell*,  
He makes meek that ere was fell,  
And weak that bold has been :  
All the needs full soon are sped,  
Both withouten *borgh* and *wed* <sup>2</sup>  
Where Penny goes between.

The *domes-men* <sup>3</sup> he makes so blind,  
That *hi* may not the right find,  
Ne the sooth to see ;  
For to give doom them is full *lath* <sup>4</sup>,  
Therewith to make Sir Penny wrath ;  
Full dear with them is he.

<sup>1</sup> Wear trailing gowns ?

<sup>3</sup> Judges.

<sup>2</sup> Borrowing and pledging.

<sup>4</sup> Loth.

There strife was Penny makes peace,  
Of all angers he may release,  
In land where he will lend ;  
Of foes may he make friendes sad,  
Of counsel there them never be *rad* <sup>1</sup>  
That may have him to friend.

That sire is set on high *dess*,  
And served with many rich mess  
At the high board :  
The more he is to men plenty,  
The more *yernid* <sup>2</sup> alway is he,  
And holden dear in hoard.

He makes many be forsworn,  
And some life and soul forlorn,  
Him to get and win :  
Other good will they none have  
But that little round knave  
Their *bales* <sup>3</sup> for to *blin* <sup>4</sup>.

On him wholly their heart is set,  
Him for to love will they not let

<sup>1</sup> Void.

<sup>2</sup> Desired.

<sup>3</sup> Misfortunes.

<sup>4</sup> End, terminate.

Neither for good ne ill ;  
All that he will in earth have done,  
*Ikka* man grants it full soon  
Right at his own will :  
He may both lend and give,  
He may *ger* both slay and live,  
Both by *frith* and *fell* <sup>1</sup>.

Penny is a good fellaw,  
Men welcomes him in deed and *saw* <sup>2</sup>,  
Come he never so oft ;  
He is not welcom'd as a guest,  
But evermore serv'd with the best,  
And made at sit full soft.

Whoso is *sted* in any need,  
With Sir Penny may they speed,  
Howsoever they betide :  
He that Sir Penny is withal,  
Shall have his will in steed and stall,  
When other are set beside.

Sir Penny *gers* in rich weed  
Full many go, and ride on steed,

<sup>1</sup> By water and land.

<sup>2</sup> Words.

In this world wide ;  
 In *ilka* gamin and *ilka* play  
 The mastery is given aye  
 To Penny for his pride.

Sir Penny over all gets the *gre* <sup>1</sup>,  
 Both in burgh and in city,  
 In castle and in tower :  
 Withouten either spear or shield,  
 Is he the best in frith or field,  
 And *stalworthest* <sup>2</sup> in *stour* <sup>3</sup>.

In *ilka* place the sooth is seen,  
 Sir Penny is over *albidene* <sup>4</sup>  
 Master most in mood ;  
 And all is as he will command,  
 Against his *steven* <sup>5</sup> dare no man stand,  
 Neither by land ne flood.

Sir Penny may full mickle avail,  
 To them that has need of counsail,  
 As seen is in *assise* <sup>6</sup> :  
 He *lenkeths* <sup>7</sup> life, and saves from *dead* <sup>8</sup>.—  
 But love it not overwell, I *rede*,  
 For sin of covetise !

<sup>1</sup> Degree, step.

<sup>3</sup> Fight, battle.

<sup>5</sup> Voice.

<sup>7</sup> Lengthens.

<sup>2</sup> Boldest, strongest.

<sup>4</sup> Altogether.

<sup>6</sup> In courts of judicature.

<sup>8</sup> Death.

If thou have hap tresour to win,  
Delight thee not too mickle therein,  
Ne *nything*<sup>1</sup> thereof be :  
But spend it as well as thou can,  
So that thou love both God and man  
In perfect charity.

God grant us grace, with heart and will,  
The goods that he has given us *till*  
Well and wisely to spend ;  
And so our lives here for to lead,  
That we may have his bliss to meed,  
Ever, without end. Amen.

The praise of Sir Penny appears to have been a favourite subject with the northern minstrels ; for a poem with the same title is to be found in Lord Hailes's Collection, p. 158 ; and another in Mr. Ritson's Ancient Songs, p. 76.

<sup>1</sup> Careless.

## CHAPTER XI.

*Reign of Henry V. (1413 to 1422.)*

LIFE OF LYDGATE.—CHARACTER OF HIS WRITINGS.—  
SPECIMENS OF HIS TROY BOOK.

AMONG the immediate successors of Chaucer, in England, the celebrated JOHN LYDGATE is confessedly the most tolerable. The time of his birth is not exactly known ; but the documents extracted by Mr. Warton from a register of the church of Bury in the Cotton library, will ascertain it with sufficient precision. It appears that he was ordained a sub-deacon in 1389 ; a deacon in 1393 ; and a priest in 1397 : so that if we suppose him to have received the first ordination at fourteen years of age, he cannot have been born later than 1375 : that is to say, twenty-five years before the death of Chaucer. This date naturally assigns him to the reign of Henry V., at whose command he undertook his metrical history of the siege of Troy, the best and most popular of his almost innumerable productions.

Few writers have been more admired by their contemporaries ; yet none have been treated with more severity by modern critics. The learned editor of the *Reliques of Ancient Poetry* mentions him with compassionate contempt : Mr. Ritson ridicules his “ cart-loads ” of poetical rubbish<sup>1</sup> : and Mr. Pinkerton considers him as posi-

<sup>1</sup> Habits of closer intimacy do not appear to have altered Mr. Ritson’s opinion or softened his language with respect to the unfortunate Dan John of Bury.

Having in a late publication taken the pains to search out and



tively stupid. Mr. Warton alone has thought it worth while to study him with much attention, or to attempt a general discussion of his literary character ; and his opinion is well worth transcribing.

“ He was a monk of the Benedictine abbey of Bury in Suffolk.—After a short education at Oxford, he travelled into France and Italy ; and returned a complete master of the language and the literature of both countries. He chiefly studied the Italian and French poets, particularly Dante, Boccaccio, and Alain Chartier ; and became so distinguished a proficient in polite learning, that he opened a school in his monastery, for teaching the sons of the nobility the arts of versification and the elegancies of composition. Yet, although philology was the object, he was not unfamiliar with the fashionable philosophy : he was not only a poet and a rhetorician, but a geometer, an astronomer, a theologian, and a disputant. On the whole, I am of opinion that Lydgate made considerable additions to those amplifications of our language, in which Chaucer, Gower, and Occleve, led the way : and that he is the first of our writers whose style is clothed with that perspicuity, in which the English phraseology appears at this day to an English reader.

“ To enumerate Lydgate’s pieces would be to write the catalogue of a little library. No poet seems to have possessed a greater versatility of talents. He moves with

enumerate Lydgate’s works, genuine or supposititious, to the almost incredible number of 251, our critic styles him “ a most prolix and voluminous poetaster,” a “ prosaick, and drivelling monk,” and proscribes “ his stupid and fatiguing productions, which by no means deserve the name of poetry,” “ his elaborate drawlings, in which there are scarcely three lines together of pure and accurate metre,” “ and their still more stupid and disgusting author, who disgraces the name and patronage of his master Chaucer,” as “ neither worth collecting,—nor even worthy of preservation.” *Bibliog. Poet.* p. 66, &c.

equal ease in every mode of composition. His hymns and his ballads have the same degree of merit : and whether his subject be the life of a hermit or a hero, of Saint Austin or Guy Earl of Warwick, ludicrous or legendary, religious or romantic, a history or an allegory, he writes with facility. His transitions were rapid from works of the most serious and laborious kind to sallies of levity and pieces of popular entertainment. His muse was of universal access ; and he was not only the poet of his monastery, but of the world in general. If a disguising was intended by the company of goldsmiths, a mask before his majesty at Eltham, a may-game for the sheriffs and aldermen of London, a mumming before the lord-mayor, a procession of pageants from the creation for the festival of Corpus Christi, or a carol for the coronation, Lydgate was consulted, and gave the poetry.

“ His manner is naturally verbose and diffuse. This circumstance contributed in no small degree to give a clearness and a fluency to his phraseology. For the same reason he is often tedious and languid. His chief excellence is in description, especially where the subject admits a flowery diction. He is seldom pathetic, or animated.”

Lydgate's most esteemed works are, his *Story of Thebes*, his *Fall of Princes*, and his *History, Siege, and Destruction of Troy*.

*The Story of Thebes*, which Speght has printed in his edition of Chaucer, and which was intended as a continuation of the *Canterbury Tales*, contains some poetical passages, which Mr. Warton has extracted. But Lydgate's style, though natural, and sometimes rich, does not possess that strength and conciseness which is observable in the works of his master. It is dangerous for a mere versifier to attempt the completion of a plan which has been begun by a poet. Lydgate's poem is not long ; but it is possible to be tedious in a very small compass.

*The Fall of Princes*, or "*Boke of John Bochas*," (first printed in 1494, by Pinson, and several times since,) is a translation from Boccaccio, or rather from a French paraphrase of his work "*De Casibus Virorum et Feminarum illustrium*," written by Laurent de Premierfait, which was originally printed at Bruges in 1476, and at Lyons in 1483. Lydgate's poem was probably useful, when first written, as a book of reference to those who could not consult the original: but the day of its popularity is past.

The *Troy Book*, however, containing (as Marshe's title-page assures us) "the onely trewe and syncere Chronicle of the warres betwixt the Grecians and the Troyans," deserves more consideration. Being a translation from Colonna's prose history, which contained the substance of Dares Phrygius and Dictys Cretensis, it comprises all the materials of one class of romantic history, and is valuable as a specimen of the learning, as well as of the credulity, of our ancestors. The story is so much connected with our early studies; that story is so comically adapted to the usages and manners of chivalry; its author is so minute and circumstantial in describing events which never happened; is so precise in his dates and numbers; so full of event and bustle; and so prodigal of ornament; that if this poem be no longer resorted to by common readers as a source of amusement, it is, perhaps, only because two close columns of black letter, presenting ninety lines in a page, are too formidable to be encountered by any eyes but those of a veteran in antiquarian researches.

The most esteemed edition of this work is that of 1555, printed by Thomas Marshe, under the care of one Robert Braham, who corrected it from many errors of the original edition, given by Pinson in 1513. It has been already observed, that Lydgate undertook this poem at the request of Henry V., when Prince of Wales:

it was begun in 1412, and finished in 1420. The first of these dates is rather oddly expressed in the following lines :

And of the time to maken mention  
 When I began on this translation,  
 It was the yeare, soothly for to sayn,  
*Fourteen complete tho of his father's reign.*  
 The time of yeare, shortly to conclude,  
 When twenty 'grees was Phebus' altitude.  
 The hour, when he hath made his steedes draw  
 His rosen chariot low under the wawe  
 To bathe his beames, &c.

(Prologue.)

Here "the year *fourteen* complete" must mean the *fourteenth*, i. e. 1412 ; for Henry IV., who began his reign in September, 1399, and died in March, 1413, did not reign fourteen complete years. The remainder of the description, though now rather obscure, was certainly intended to express very exactly the moment at which Lydgate began his poem ; and was probably intelligible to contemporary readers. Judicial astrology was then in vogue ; and he was anxious to prove that he had commenced his operation at a lucky moment. His work, perhaps, may not give us reason to believe in the poetical influence of the stars ; but we must at least approve his modesty, in trusting the perfection of his verses to good fortune rather than to genius.

Every one knows that Laomedon, King of Troy, had the rashness to offend Jason and Hercules, who stopped in his country on their way to Colchis ; and that Hercules revenged this "uncourtesy" by destroying the city of Troy. Such an episode in the adventures of the Argo-

nauts naturally connects the second Trojan war with their expedition, which is therefore related by Lydgate as minutely as if he had been their shipmate, and had kept a journal of the voyage. The following lines describe part of the ceremonial used by King Oetes, after Jason's first audience :

The time approacheth, and gan to nigh fast,  
That officers full busily them cast  
To make ready, with all their busy cure,  
And in the halle *bordes*<sup>1</sup> for to *cure*<sup>2</sup>.  
For by the dial the hour they gan to mark  
That Phœbus southward whirled up his ârk,  
So high alofte that it drew to *none* ;  
That it was time for the king to gone  
Unto his meat, and enter into hall.  
And then Oetes, with his lordes all,  
And with his knights about him every one,  
With Hercules, and also with Jasôn,  
Is set to meate in his royal see ;  
And every lorde like to his *degré*.  
But first of all, this worthy man Jasôn  
Assigned was by the kinge anon  
For to sitte at his owne board :  
And Hercules, that was so great a lord,  
Was sette also faste by his side.  
And the marshall no longer list abide,  
To assign estates where they shoulde be ;  
Like as they were of high or low degree.

<sup>1 2</sup> To arrange and *dress the tables*.

And after that, on scaffold high aloft,  
 The noise gan loude, and nothings soft,  
 Of trumpeters, and eke of clarioners :  
 And therewithal, the noble officers  
 Full thriftely served have the hall.

\* \* \* \* \*

I want cunning by order to *describe*  
 Of every course the diversities,  
 The strange *sewes*<sup>1</sup>, and the *subtleties*<sup>2</sup>,  
 That were that day served in that place, &c.  
 (Cap. v. ed. Marsh. sign. C. 4.)

The following picture of Medea's growing passion is not inelegant :

For as he sat at meat *tho* in that tide,  
 Her father next, and Jason by her side,  
 All suddenly her fresh and rosen hue  
 Full ofte-time gan changen and renew,  
 An hundred *sithes*<sup>3</sup> in a little space.  
 For now, the bloode from her goodly face  
 Unto her heart unwarely gan *avale*<sup>4</sup> :  
 And therewithal she waxeth dead and pale.

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Tyrwhitt explains *sewes*, dishes; but his quotation from Gower rather proves it to mean broths, or soups, in which sense the word often occurs in ancient cookery-receipts. Sax. *Seawe*, succus, liquor (Lye's Dict.); *sewe*. Fr. The Scots still use the word *sowens* for a sort of oatmeal broth, or flummery.

<sup>2</sup> These were ornaments placed on the table, and sometimes illustrated with mottos.

<sup>3</sup> Times.

<sup>4</sup> Descend. Fr.

And *eft*<sup>1</sup> anon (who thereto gan take heed)  
 Her hue returneth into goodly red :  
 But still among, t' embellish her colour,  
 The rose was *meyn*<sup>2</sup> aye with the lily flower ;  
 And though the rose some dele gan to pace,  
 Yet still the lily bideth in his place,  
 Till nature made them *eft* again to meet.

\* \* \* \* \*  
 For now she brent, and now she gan to cold.  
 And aye the more that she gan behold  
 This Jason young, the more she gan desire  
 To look on him ; so was she set a-fire  
 With his beautè, and his semelyness,  
 And every thing she inly gan impress.  
 What that she sawe, both in mind and thought  
 She all imprinteth, and forgetteth nought.  
 For she considereth every circumstance,  
 Both of his port and [of] his governance ;  
 His sunnish hair, crisped like gold wire,  
 His knightly look, and his manly cheer.

(Chap. v. sign. D. i.)

The first book concludes with the destruction of Troy by Hercules : the second relates the building of the new city by Priam, the mission of Antenor into Greece, the predatory expedition of Paris, &c., and ends with the landing of the Greeks before Troy : the third book contains the whole history of the siege till the death of Hector : the fourth relates the election of Palamedes as

<sup>1</sup> Again. Sax.

<sup>2</sup> Mixed.

commander of the Greeks, and the deposition of Agamemnon, as also the remainder of the siege, the story of the "horse of brass," and the destruction of the city: the fifth and last book describes the miseries endured by the Greeks on their passage home, and gives the genealogy of "Pirrhus, how his father hight Pelæus," &c. In this book the poet implores the favour of his readers, assuring them that—

—though so be that they not ne read

In all this book no rethorikes newe,

Yet this I hope, THAT THEY SHALL FIND ALL TRUE.

(Cap. xxxviii. sign. Ee. ii.)

One of the most amusing passages in this poem is contained in the seventeenth chapter, and relates to a well-known event in the life of Venus. Lydgate thus expresses his indignation against Vulcan:

The *smotry*<sup>1</sup> smith, this swarte Vúlcanus,  
That whilom in hearte was so jealous  
Toward Venus, that was his wedded wife,  
Whereof there rose a deadly mortal strife,  
When he with Mars gan her first espy  
Of high malice, and cruel false envý,  
Through the shining of Phœbus' beames bright,  
Lying a-bed with Mars her owne knight.  
For which in heart he brent as any *glede*<sup>2</sup>,  
Making the slander all abroad to sprede,  
And gan thereon falsely for to muse.

<sup>1</sup> Smoky, or smutty.

<sup>2</sup> A burning coal. Sax.



And God forbid that any man accuse  
 For so LITTLE any woman ever !  
 Where love is set, hard is to dissever !  
 For though they do such thing of gentleness,  
 Pass over lightly, and bear none heaviness,  
 Lest that thou be to women odious !  
 And yet this smith, this false Vúlcanus,  
 Albe that he had them thus espied,  
 Among Paynims yet was he deified !  
 And, for that he so FALSELY THEM AWOKE,  
 I have him set last of all my boke,  
 Among the goddes of false máwmentry <sup>1</sup>, &c.  
(Sign. L. i.)

Upon this occasion, the morals of our poetical monk are so very pliant, that it is difficult to suppose him quite free from personal motives which might have influenced his doctrine. Perhaps he had been incommoded by some intrusive husband at a moment when he felt tired of celibacy, and wished to indulge in a temporary relaxation from the severity of monastic discipline <sup>2</sup>.

The picture of Venus is thus curiously described :

And she stant naked in a wavy sea,  
 Environ her with goddesses three,

<sup>1</sup> Mahometry, i. e. idolatry. It may be proper to observe, that no part of this passage is to be found in Colonna's original. In general, indeed, Lydgate's is by no means a translation, but a very loose paraphrase.

<sup>2</sup> Suspecting that Lydgate had borrowed this singular passage from some French paraphrase of Colonna's work, I examined the anonymous translation in the Museum (Bibl. Reg. 16, F. ix.), but could not find any traces of such a deviation from the original.

That be assign'd with busy attendance  
 To wait on her and do her observance.  
 And floures freshe, blue, red, and white,  
 Be her about, the more for to delight.  
 And on her heade she hath a chaplet  
 Of roses red full pleasantly y-set,  
 AND FROM THE HEADE DOWN UNTO HER FOOT  
 WITH SUNDRY GUMS AND OINTEMENTES SOOTE  
 SHE IS ENOINTE, SWEETER FOR TO SMELL.  
 And all alofte, as these poets tell,  
 Be doves white, fleeing, and eke sparrows,  
 And her beside Cupyde with his arrows.

(Cap. xvii. *ibid.*)

The following particulars in the description of Fortune, at the beginning of the second book, are rather singular :

And thus this lady, wilful and recklèss,  
 As she that is froward and perverse,  
 HATH IN HER CELLAR DRINKES FULL DIVERSE.  
 For she to some, of fraud and of *fallas*,  
 Ministreth *piment*, *bawme*, and *ypocras* ;  
 And suddenly, when the soote is past,  
 She of custome can give him a cast,  
 For to conclude falsely in the fine,  
 Of bitter *eysell*<sup>1</sup> and of eager wine ;

<sup>1</sup> *Aisel*, old Fr., vinegar. (Vide *Tresor de Borel*.)

And corrosives that fret and pierce deep ;  
And narcotics that cause men to sleep.

(Cap. x. sign. F. ii.)

These, it is true, are not very poetical passages, nor are we to expect from Lydgate much liveliness of fancy or brilliancy of expression. His merit, such as it is, cannot easily be exemplified in short extracts ; and is rather likely to find favour in the eyes of the antiquarian than of the poet. By readers of the former description, the following passages, from the description of Troy, may perhaps be perused with patience :

And, as I read, the walles were on height  
Two hundred cubits ; all of marble grey,  
*Magecolled*<sup>1</sup> without, for *sautes*<sup>2</sup>, and assay :  
And it to make more pleasant of delight,  
Among the marble was albaster white,  
*Meynt* in the walls —————

\* \* \* \* \*

And at the corner of every wall was set  
A crown of gold with riche stones y-fret,  
That shone full bright *again* the sunne shene ;  
And every tower *bretexed*<sup>3</sup> was so clean  
Of chose stone that were not far asunder,

<sup>1</sup> The *machecoulis* were the openings under the parapets of a gate, or the salient galleries of a tower, to defend the foot of the wall by pouring down hot water, or pitch, or sometimes dropping stones on the heads of the besiegers.

<sup>2</sup> Assaults.

<sup>3</sup> Probably *embattled*, from the French word *bretter*, to *indent*. Cotgrave. — *Bretescher, fortifier*. Dict. Roman.

That to beholde it was very wonder.  
 Thereto his city, compass'd environ,  
 Had gates six to enter into town—

\* \* \* \* \*

With square toures set on every side ;  
 At whose corners, of very pomp and pride,  
 The workmen have, with fell and stern visâges,  
 Of rich *entayle*<sup>1</sup> up-raised great imâges,  
 Wrought out of stone, and never like to fail,  
 Full curiously enarmed for batayle.  
 And through the wall, their foemen for to let,  
 At every toure were great gunnes set,  
 For *assautes* and sudden âventures.  
 And on each turrets were raised up figures  
 Of savage beasts, as bears, and of lions,  
 Of tygers, boars, of serpents, and dragons,  
 And hartes eke with their broade horns ;  
 Of elephantes, and large unicorns,  
 Bugles, bulles, and many great griffon,  
 Forged of brass, of copper, and *laton*<sup>2</sup>,  
 That cruelly by signes of their faces  
 Upon their fœn made fell menâces.  
 Barbicans, and also bulwarks huge,  
 Afore the towne made for high refuge,

<sup>1</sup> Sculpture. Fr.

<sup>2</sup> *Latten* denotes iron plates tinned over. Owen's Dict. of Arts and Sciences.

When neede should be, early and eke and late ;  
 And *portekoles*<sup>1</sup> strong at every gate,  
 That of *assautes* they need take no charge.  
 And the lockes thicke, broade, and large,  
 Of all the gates well wrought of shining brass.  
 And eke within the mighty shutting was  
 Of iron barres, stronge, square, and round,  
 And great barres pitched in the ground,  
 With huge chaines forged for defence,  
 That ne would breake for no violence,  
 That harde it was through them for to win.

And every house that builded was within,  
 Every palace, and every mansion,  
 Of marble were throughout all the town,

\* \* \* \*

And if I should rehearsen by and by  
 The *corve*<sup>2</sup> knots, by craft of masonry,  
 The fresh *enbowing*<sup>3</sup> with *verges*<sup>4</sup> *right as lines*,  
 And the *housing*<sup>5</sup> full of *backewines*<sup>6</sup>,  
 The rich *coining*<sup>7</sup>, the lusty tablements,  
 Vinettes running in casements,  
 Though the termes in English woulden rhyme,  
 To shew them all I have as now no time.

\* \* \* \*

<sup>1</sup> Portcullices.

<sup>2</sup> Carved.

<sup>3</sup> *Arching?*

<sup>4 5 6 7</sup> I do not quite understand any of these terms.

And through the town, with crafty púrveyance,  
 By great *avise*<sup>1</sup> and discreet ordinance,  
 By compass cast, and squared out by *squyers*<sup>2</sup>,  
 Of polish'd marble, upon strong pillèrs,  
 Devised were, longe, large, and wide,  
 Of every streete in the fronter side,  
 Fresk *alures*, with lusty high pinâcles,  
 And *mounstring*<sup>3</sup> outward costly tabernacles :  
 Vaulted above like to reclinatories,  
 That called were deambulatories,  
 [For] men to walk together, twain and twain,  
 To keep them dry when it happed to rain.

\* \* \* \* \*

And every house covered was with lead,  
 And many *gargoyle*<sup>4</sup>, and many hideous head,  
 With spouts thorough, and pipes, as they ought,  
 From the stone-worke to the kennel *raught*<sup>5</sup>,  
 Voiding filthes low into the ground  
 Thorough grates made of iron pierced round.  
 The streets paved, both in length and *brede*<sup>6</sup>,  
 In chequer wise, with stones white and *reade*<sup>7</sup>.

(Cap. xi. sign. F. v. &c.)

<sup>1</sup> *Avis*, F.; counsel.

<sup>2</sup> *Esquierre*, now spelt *equerre*, the carpenter's *square*.

<sup>3</sup> Exhibiting; *monstrant*. Old Fr. Colonna's original only says:  
 "In ipsarum vero lateribus platearum innumerabiles columnæ mar-  
 moreis arcubus circumvolutis erectæ, et super ipsorum ædificiis  
 elevatæ."

<sup>4</sup> *Gargouille*, Fr., is the end of a spout; they are usually termi-  
 nated with heads of animals.

<sup>5</sup> Reached.

<sup>6</sup> Breadth.

<sup>7</sup> Red.—This pavement is not described in the original.

After a great deal more of minute description, Lydgate tells us, that Priam built a sort of circus—

<sup>1</sup> To give his men *in knighthood* exercise,  
*Everyche* to put other at assay  
*In justes, listes, and also in tournèy*—

(Sign. F. vi.)

As also that—

—there was found by clerkes full prudènt

<sup>2</sup> Of the *CHES* the play most glorious,  
 Which is so subtle and so marvellous<sup>3</sup>,

And that at the same time—

Also in Troy by great avisément  
 The play was founde first of *dice*, and *tables*,  
 And castinge the chances deceivables.

(Ibid.)

He then, after defining tragedy and comedy, describes the *theatre*, in which a poet delivers from a pulpit his tragedies :

And while that he in the pulpit stood,  
 With deadly face all devoid of blood,

\* \* \* \* \*

<sup>1</sup> Not in the original.

<sup>2</sup> Ibi primo adinventum fuerunt *scaccorum solatia curiosa* ; ibi ludi subito irascibiles *alearum* ; hic repentina damna et lucra momentanea *taxillorum*.

<sup>3</sup> Lydgate informs us that this game was “first found in this city during the siege like as saith Guydo,” though he thinks it necessary to add, “*Jacobus de Vitriaco* is contrary in his opinion,” *affirming* it to be of Chaldean original.

Amid the theatre shrouded in a tent,  
 There came out men, ghastful of their cheers,  
*Diffigured their faces with viseres,*  
*<sup>1</sup> Playing by signes in the people's sight —*

And proceeds to tell us—

How Priamus was passing diligent  
 Right desirous and inwardly fervent,  
 If so he might among his workes all  
 Do build a palace, and a riche hall,  
 Which should be his *chose chief dungeon* <sup>2</sup>,  
 His royal see, and sovereign mansion.  
 And when he gan to his worke approach,  
 He made it bulde high upon a *roche*,  
 It for to assure in its foundation,  
 And called it the noble Ilion.

\* \* \* \* \*

And high amids this noble Ilion,  
 So rich and passing of foundation,  
 Which clerkes yet in their bookes praise,  
 King Priam made a hall for to raise :

\* \* \* \* \*

And, of this hall farther to define,  
 With stones square by level and by line  
 It paved was, with full great diligence  
 Of masonry, and passing excellence ;

<sup>1</sup> Not in the original.

<sup>2</sup> Pro suæ habitationis hospitio.



And all above raised was a *see*  
 Full curiously of stones and *perrè*<sup>1</sup>,  
 That called was, as chief and principal,  
 Of the *reigne*<sup>2</sup> the seat most royal.  
 Tofore which was set by great delight  
 A *board*<sup>3</sup> of ebon and of ivory white,  
 So *egally* y-joined and so clean  
 That in the work there was *ryft*<sup>4</sup> y-seen.  
 And *sessyons*<sup>5</sup> were made on every side  
 Only the estates by order to divide.  
 Eke, in the hall, as it was convenable,  
 On eache partye was a *dormant*<sup>6</sup> table  
 Of ivory eke, and of this ebon tree.

(Sign. F. vi. &c.)

The bounds of the present sketch will not permit a farther accumulation of extracts from this obsolete poem ; in which, however, the inquisitive reader will find much curious information, though he will not discover such poetical beauties as can justify its original popularity. That popularity was, indeed, excessive and unbounded ; and it continued without much diminution during, at least,

<sup>1</sup> *Pierreries*, jewels. Fr.

<sup>2</sup> Kingdom.

<sup>3</sup> Table.

<sup>4</sup> Fissure.

<sup>5</sup> Seats.

<sup>6</sup> *Fixed ready*. Tyrwhitt. In Chaucer's prologue, the *Frankleyn's table*

——— "*dormant in his hall alway,  
 Stood ready covered all the longe day.*"

Perhaps the common tables resembled those still in use in France, which consist of a few boards nailed together, and placed (when wanted for use) on folding trestles ; so that the different parts may be separately removed.

two centuries. To this the praises of succeeding writers bear ample testimony ; but it is confirmed by a direct and most singular evidence. An anonymous writer has taken the pains to modernize the entire poem, consisting of about twenty-eight thousand verses, to change the ancient context and almost every rhyme, and to throw the whole into six-line stanzas ; and yet, so little was he solicitous to raise his own reputation at the expense of the original author, that, though he has altered the title and preface of the work, he has still ascribed it to Lydgate. This strange instance of perverted talents and industry was published under the title of "*The Life and Death of Hector,*" by Thomas Purfoot, 1614, and is well known to the booksellers.

The date of Lydgate's death is doubtful ; at least it is stated differently by different authors. In his *Philomela* he mentions the decease of an Earl of Warwick, who died in 1446, so that he must have survived that year. Some authorities place his death in 1461, and this date is not improbable.

## CHAPTER XII.

*Reign of Henry V. continued.*JAMES I. KING OF SCOTLAND.—EXTRACT FROM THE  
KING'S QUAIR.

WE are probably indebted to an accident which happened in the reign of Henry IV. for the most elegant poem that was produced during the early part of the fifteenth century : it is called *The King's Quair*<sup>1</sup>, and was written by JAMES I. KING OF SCOTLAND.

This prince was the second son of Robert III., and was born in 1395. His elder brother, David, having disgraced himself by the general profligacy of his conduct, was confined, by his father's order, in the palace of Falkland, where he died of a dysentery, in 1401 ; or, as was more generally believed, was starved to death, by order of his uncle the Duke of Albany, to whom Robert had entrusted the administration of the kingdom. After the death of this prince, the king determined to send his surviving son, James, to be educated at the court of his ally, Charles VI., King of France ; and James embarked for that country, with his governor the Earl of Orkney, and a numerous train of attendants : but the ship was stopped, on the 12th of April, 1405, off Flamborough-Head, by an English squadron, and the passengers were, by order of Henry IV., sent as prisoners to London.

This happened about a week before the termination of a truce ; and though such infractions of treaties were

<sup>1</sup> *Cahier*, Fr. ; whence quire.

very common during the barbarous warfare which was at that time carried on between England and Scotland, the capture and subsequent detention of James were attributed to the intrigues of the Duke of Albany, who, in consequence of the death of King Robert, in the following year was nominated regent of Scotland; and who, by means of the king's long detention in England, not only preserved that dignity to the end of his life, but quietly transmitted it to his son Murdoch, Earl of Fife.

That Henry had no right to consider as a prisoner the sovereign of an independent nation, whom an act of insolent violence had placed within his power, is perfectly evident; but the accident was perhaps ultimately advantageous to the prince himself, as well as to the nation which he was born to govern. He was at this time only ten years of age; and Henry, though he treated him with rigour, and even kept him confined for two years in the Tower, took the greatest care of his education, and appointed as his governor Sir John Pelham, a man of worth and learning, under whose tuition he made so rapid a progress, that he soon became a prodigy of talents and accomplishments. His character, as drawn by the historians of that age, is such as we seldom see realized. We are assured that he became a proficient in every branch of polite literature; in grammar, oratory, Latin, and English poetry, music, jurisprudence, and the philosophy of the times; and that his dexterity in tilts and tournaments, in wrestling, in archery, and in the sports of the field, was perfectly unrivalled.

It might be objected, that those who possess only a part of these accomplishments are apt to gain credit for all the rest; that the owner of a crown is seldom judged with severity; that unmerited misfortune is sure to excite sympathy and commiseration; and that, as James united all these claims to popular favour, some parts of the preceding description are likely to have been somewhat ex-

aggrated. But the excellent laws which he enacted after his return to Scotland, and the happiness which his people enjoyed in consequence of his policy, his firmness, and his justice, bear the most unequivocal testimony to the truth of one part of the picture ; and his poetical remains are sufficient to evince that his literary talents were not over-rated by his contemporaries.

During fifteen years of his captivity, he seemed forgotten, or at least neglected, by his subjects. The admiration of strangers and the consciousness of his own talents only rendered his situation more irksome ; and he had begun to abandon himself to despair, when he was fortunately consoled for his seclusion at Windsor Castle by a passion of which sovereigns, in quiet possession of a throne, have seldom the good fortune to feel the influence. The object of his adoration was the Lady Jane Beaufort (daughter of John Beaufort, Duke of Somerset, and grand-daughter of John of Gaunt), whom he afterwards married, and in whose commendation he composed his principal poetical work, called the *King's Quair*.

This poem, consisting of one hundred and ninety-seven stanzas, divided by its editor into six cantos, has much allegorical machinery, which was apparently suggested by the study of Boethius, the favourite author of the time ; but it also contains various particulars of his life ; it is full of simplicity and feeling, and is not inferior in poetical merit to any similar production of Chaucer. The following extract is taken from the second canto, in which no allegorical painting is introduced, and which contains little more than an account of his own adventures.

## X.

The longe dayes and the nightis eke

I would bewail my fortune in this wise ;

For which *again* distress comfort to seek,  
 My custom was on mornis for to rise  
 Early as day : O happy excercise !  
 By thee come I to joy out of tormènt :—  
 But now to purpose of my first intent.

## XI.

Bewailing in my chamber thus alone,  
 Despaired of all joy and remedy,  
 For-tired of my thought, and woe-begone,  
 And to the window gan I walk *in hye*,  
 To see the world and folk that went forby ;  
 As, for the time (though I of mirthis food  
 Might have no more), to look it did me good.

## XII.

Now was there made, fast by the Touris wall,  
 A garden fair <sup>1</sup> ; and in the corners set  
 An *herbere* <sup>2</sup> green ; with wandis long and small

<sup>1</sup> The gardens of this period seem to have been very small. In Chaucer's *Troilus and Cresseide* we find the same place indifferently called a *garden* and a *yard* ; and this at Windsor, *fast by the Touris wall*, was probably either in the yard or on the terrace.

“ Adown the stair anon right *tho* she went  
 Into her *garden*,” &c.—

“ This *yard* was large, and railed all the aleyes,  
 And shadowed well with blossomy boughs green ;  
 And benched new, and sanded all the ways,  
 In which she walketh,” &c.

(*Troil. and Cr. b. ii. st. 110, fol. 152, ed. 1602.*)

<sup>2</sup> Probably an harbour, though the word is also very frequently used for an *herbary*, or garden of simples.

Railed about, and so with treeis set  
 Was all the place, and hawthorn hedges knet  
 That *life*<sup>1</sup> was none [a] walking there forby,  
 That might within scarce any wight espy.

## XIV.

And on the smalle grene twistis sat  
 The little sweete nightingale, and sung  
 So loud and clear the hymnis consecrate  
 Of lovis use, now soft, now loud among,  
 That all the gardens and the wallis rung  
 Right of their song ; *and on the couple next*<sup>2</sup>  
 Of their sweet harmony : and lo the text !

## XV.

“ Worshippe ye that lovers *bene* this May,  
 For of your bliss the calends are begun ;  
 And sing with us, ‘ Away ! winter away !  
 Come summer, come ! the sweet season and sun !  
 Awake, for shame ! that have your heavens won<sup>3</sup> !  
 And amorously lift up your headis all ;  
 Thank Love, that list you to his mercy call ! ’ ”

<sup>1</sup> Living person.

<sup>2</sup> Mr. Tytler imagines that this relates to the pairing of the birds ; but the word *couple* seems here to be used as a musical term.

<sup>3</sup> Mr. Tytler explains this as follows : “ Ye that have attained your highest bliss, by winning your mates.—See the last line of the next stanza.”

## XVI.

When they this song had sung a *little throw*<sup>1</sup>  
 They *stent*<sup>2</sup> awhile, and, therewith unafraid  
 As I beheld, and cast mine eyen a-lowe,  
 From bough to bough they *hipped*<sup>3</sup> and they play'd,  
 And freshly, in their birdis kind, array'd  
 Their feathers new, and *fret*<sup>4</sup> them in the sun,  
 And thanked Love that had their *makis*<sup>5</sup> won.

These and a few more stanzas are preparatory to the appearance of his mistress, his first sight of whom is thus described :

## XXI.

And therewith cast I down mine eye again,  
 Whereas I saw, walking under the Tower  
 Full secretly, new comyn her to *pleyne*<sup>6</sup>,  
 The fairest, or the freshest younge flower  
 That ever I saw, methought, before that hour ;  
 For which sudden *abate* anon *astert*<sup>7</sup>  
 The blood of all my body to my heart.

## XXII.

And though I stood abased *tho a lyte*<sup>8</sup>,  
 No wonder was ; for why ? my wittis all

<sup>1</sup> A little time.<sup>2</sup> Stopped.<sup>3</sup> Hopped.<sup>4</sup> Pecked.<sup>5</sup> Mates.<sup>6</sup> This seems to mean *complain* ; but should it not rather be *playen*, to *play* or sport ?<sup>7</sup> Started back.<sup>8</sup> Then a little.



Were so o'ercome with pleassance and delight,  
 Only through letting of mine eyen fall,  
 That suddenly my heart become her thrall  
 For ever ; of free will ; for of menàce  
 There was no token in her sweete face.

## XXIII.

And in my head I drew right hastily ;  
 And eft-soones I lent it forth again :  
 And saw her walk that very womanly,  
 With no wight *mo* but only women twain.  
 Then gan I study in myself, and sayn,  
 " Ah sweet, are ye a worldly créature,  
 Or heavenly thing in likeness of nature ?

## XXIV.

" Or are ye god Cupidis own princèss,  
 And comen are to loose me out of band ?  
 Or are ye very Nature the goddèss,  
 That have depainted with your heavenly hand  
 This garden full of flouris as they stand ?  
 What shall I think, alas ! what reverence  
 Shall I *mestèr* <sup>1</sup> [un] to your excellence ?

## XXV.

" *Giff* ye a goddess be, and that ye like  
 To do me pain, I may it not *astert* :

<sup>1</sup> *Administer* ? (Tytler.)

Giff ye be worldly wight, that doth me *sike*<sup>1</sup>,  
 Why *lest*<sup>2</sup> God make you so, my dearest heart,  
 To do a silly prisoner thus smart,  
 That loves you all, and wote of nought but wo?  
 And, therefore, mercy sweet! *sen* it is so."

The dress and figure of his mistress are minutely painted as follows :

## XXVII.

Of her array the form *gif* I shall write,  
 Toward her golden hair and rich attire,  
 In fret-wise couched with pearlis white,  
 And greate *balas*<sup>3</sup> *lemyng*<sup>4</sup> as the fire,  
 With many an emerant and fair sapphìre,  
 And on her head a chaplet fresh of hue  
 Of plumys, parted red, and white, and blue.

## XXVIII.

Full of quaking *spangis*<sup>5</sup> bright as gold,  
 Forged of shape like to the *amorettis*<sup>6</sup>;  
 So new, so fresh, so pleasant to behold ;

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Tytler supposes this word to stand for *sike*, or *syke*, signifying *sorrow*, altered for the sake of the metre :—but qu. ?

<sup>2</sup> "If thou art a goddess, I cannot resist thy power ; but if only a mortal creature, God surely cannot lest or incline you to grieve, or give pain to a poor creature that loves you." (Tytler.)

<sup>3</sup> A sort of precious stones (says Urry) brought from Balassia, in India. Tyrwhitt says, that *balais*, Fr., is a sort of *bastard ruby*.

<sup>4</sup> Shining.

<sup>5</sup> Spangles.

"Made in the form of a love-knot or garland." (Tytler.)

The plumis eke like to the *floure-jonettis*<sup>1</sup>,  
 And other of shape like to the *floure-jonettis*<sup>2</sup>;  
 And above all this there was, well I wote,  
 Beauty enough to make a world to dote!

## XXIX.

About her neck, white as the *fyre amaille*<sup>3</sup>,  
 A goodly chain of small *orfeverye*<sup>4</sup>;  
 Whereby there hang a ruby without fail,  
 Like to an heart [y-] shapen verily,  
 That as a spark of *lowe*<sup>5</sup>, so wantonly  
 Seemed burning upon her white throat;  
 Now *gif* there was good party, God it wote.

## XXX.

And for to walk, that freshe Maye's morrow,  
 An hook she had upon her tissue white,  
 That goodlier had not been seen *to-forrow*<sup>6</sup>,  
 As I suppose; and girt she was a *lyte*<sup>7</sup>;  
 Thus *halving*<sup>8</sup> loose for haste, to such delight  
 It was to see her youth in goodlihead,  
 That, for rudeness, to speak thereof I dred.

<sup>1</sup> Probably the *fleur de genêt* (*genista*), broom.

<sup>2</sup> The repetition of this word is apparently a mistake of the original transcriber.

<sup>3</sup> Qu. Is this an error for *fair email*, i. e. enamel.

<sup>4</sup> Fr. Goldsmith's-work.

<sup>5</sup> Fire. (Ruddiman's Glossary.)

<sup>6</sup> Before.

<sup>7</sup> A little.

<sup>8</sup> Half.

## XXXI.

In her was youth, beauty, with humble aport,  
Bounty, richness, and womanly featùre ;  
God better wote than my pen can report :  
Wisdom, largèss, estate, and cunning sure,  
In every point so guided her measùre,  
In word, in deed, in shape, in countenance,  
That Nature might no more her child avance.

It would, perhaps, be difficult to select even from Chaucer's most finished works a long specimen of descriptive poetry so uniformly elegant as this : indeed some of the verses are so highly finished, that they would not disfigure the compositions of Dryden, Pope, or Gray. Nor was King James's talent confined to serious and pathetic compositions. Two poems of a ludicrous cast, and which have been the constant favourites of the Scottish people to the present day, are now universally attributed to this monarch. These are *Christ's Kirk on the Green*, and *Peblis to the Play* ; the first composed in the northern, and the second in the southern dialect of Scotland. A third, called *Falkland on the Green*, which Mr. Pinkerton supposes to have described the popular sports of the central district of the kingdom, and to have been written in the Fifeshire dialect, has hitherto eluded the researches of antiquaries. In Mr. Pinkerton's *Ancient Scottish Poems* (London, 1786, p. 214,) is found a *Song on Absence*, which the editor suspects to be the same described by *Major*, as beginning with the words *Yassen, &c.*

Of the King's Quair only one MS. is known to exist : it is a small folio. in the Bodleian library. (Seld. Archiv. b. xxiv.) Mr. Tytler, having procured a transcript of

this MS. published it at Edinburgh, 1788, together with *Christ's Kirk on the Green*, under the title of "Poetical Remains of James I." The work is illustrated with copious notes, and with two dissertations; the first on the life and writings of the author, and the second on Scottish music.

A strange fatality seems to have attended the literature of this period. It has been just observed, that King James's work was lately recovered by the casual preservation of a single manuscript. His contemporary, CHARLES DUKE OF ORLEANS, father of Louis XII., is still very imperfectly known to the public by means of some short specimens of his poetry given in the *Annales Postiques* (Paris, 1778), and of a few more published in M. de Paulmy's *Mélanges d'une grande Bibliothèque*.

It is singular enough, that the two best poets of the age,—both of royal blood, both prisoners at the same court, both distinguished by their military as well as literary talents, both admired during their lives, and regretted after death, as the brightest ornaments of their respective nations,—should have been forgotten by the world during more than three centuries, and at length restored to their reputation at the same period. The Duke of Orleans, who was taken prisoner at the battle of Agincourt, acquired such a proficiency in our language, during a stay of twenty years in this country, as to write several small pieces of English poetry, which are said to be still preserved in MS. in the Royal Library at Paris. These may possibly not be worth transcribing<sup>1</sup>; but,

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Ritson has printed (page 47 of his Dissertation on Ancient Songs and Music, prefixed to his Ancient Songs, London, 1792) a specimen of this Prince's English Poetry, copied from No. 682 of the Harleian MSS. It is a dialogue between a lover and his mistress; but, being founded on a strange sort of pun, or play on words, it is very obscure, and apparently not worth unriddling.

Another MS. in the Museum (Bibl. Reg. 16, f. ii.) solely con-

whatever be their poetical merit, they may fairly be adduced as a proof that our language at this time acquired some estimation in the eyes of foreigners.

sisting of Poems by the Duke of Orleans, affords three specimens of his attempts at English poetry; and, as they are very short, and never were printed, I shall here subjoin them all, in their original orthography.

## CHANSON.

Go forth, my hert, with my lady!

Loke that ye spar no *bysynes* <sup>1</sup>,

To serve her with such *lolyne* <sup>2</sup>

(*That* <sup>3</sup> ye gette her *oftyme* <sup>4</sup> pryvely)

That she kepe truly her promès.

Go forth, &c.

*Iniust* as a *helis* body <sup>5</sup>

Abyde alone in hevynes;

And ye shall dwell with your maistrès

In plaissauns, glad and mery.

Go forth, &c.

## CHANSON.

My hertly love is in your governauns,

And ever shal, whill that I lyve may;

I pray to God I may see that day

That we be knyt with trouthfull alyauns.

Ye shal not fynd feynyng or variauns,

As *in* <sup>6</sup> my part: that wyl I trewly say.

My hertly, &c.

## CHANSON.

*Ne were* <sup>7</sup> my trewe innocent hert,

How ye hold with her aliauns,

<sup>1</sup> Care, attention.

<sup>2</sup> Lowliness.

<sup>3</sup> If that?

<sup>4</sup> At any time?

<sup>5</sup> I cannot understand the word *iniust*; perhaps it means *exactly*.  
*Helis* is perhaps *helo-less*, i. e. unhealthy, diseased.

<sup>6</sup> On.

<sup>7</sup> Query, if a mistake of the transcriber, for *beware*? or, perhaps, for *may*! 'ware.

It has been observed, that King James is represented to have been a complete master of music. This art, indeed, was considered, perhaps from some indistinct notion of its effects in humanizing the savage inhabitants of the earth, as a part of education not only essential to the accomplished knight, but to the sovereign, legislator, and divine : and as closely connected with every branch of learning, whether abstract or practical. In Pierce Ploughman, *Study says of Scripture*,

“ Logic I learned her, and many other laws,  
And all the unisons in music I made her to know.”  
(Pass. x.)

Fordun, in his *Scotichronicon*, has employed a whole chapter in describing James's uncommon excellence in the art ; and Mr. Tytler, combining this testimony with a very curious passage in the works of *Alessandro Tassoni*, has inferred that James I. was the “ reformer, if not the

That somtym with word of plesauns  
Desceyved you under covèrt.  
Thynke how the stroke of love com smert,  
Without warning or *deffiauns* <sup>1</sup>.  
Ne were my, &c.  
And <sup>2</sup> ye shall pryvely or appert,  
See her by me in love's dauns,  
With her fair femenyn contenauns  
Ye shall never fro her astert !  
Ne were my, &c.

The MS. from which the foregoing extracts were made contains some illuminations of exquisite beauty. One of these represents a person of rank, probably the duke, in the white tower, writing, and attended by guards : at a distance is London bridge, with the houses and chapel built upon it ; and the latter building is so minutely drawn, as to afford a very good idea of what it really was. The MS. was written for the use of Henry VII.

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<sup>1</sup> Mistrust. Fr.

<sup>2</sup> An, if.

inventor of the Scottish songs or vocal music." By this he means, not that the peculiar *melody* of Scottish airs took its rise in the fifteenth century, but that James I. adapted it to modern *harmony*, and introduced it into regular composition, by which means it became known to the musical professors of Italy and the rest of Europe. Mr. Pinkerton, on the contrary, is of opinion that the "*Giacomo Re di Scozia*," mentioned by Tassoni, is the *sixth*, and Mr. Ritson is of the same opinion. The reader must decide for himself.

After the death of the Duke of Albany, the incapacity of his successor induced the Scottish nobility to enter into serious negotiation for the liberty of their captive sovereign ; who, after agreeing to pay a heavy ransom for his freedom, was married, in 1424, to his beloved mistress, and at the same time restored to his kingdom. In 1437 he was assassinated at Perth, after a reign of twelve years, equally honourable to himself and beneficial to his people.



## CHAPTER XIII.

*Reign of Henry VI. (1422 to 1471.)*

## DIGRESSION ON THE PRIVATE LIFE OF THE ENGLISH.

THAT we may not be encumbered by the accumulation of our materials, it is obviously necessary to take some opportunity of reviewing those which we have collected ; of comparing them with such descriptions of national manners as are furnished by our professed historians ; and of connecting them with such farther particulars as are to be gleaned from sources of incidental information. For this necessary digression, there is no period more convenient than that on which we are now entering ; because the interval between the reigns of Henry V. and Henry VIII., which comprehends near a century, although uncommonly rich in Scottish poets of distinguished excellence, *does not furnish us with a single name among the natives of England deserving of much notice.* Our survey must, of course, be very rapid and rather desultory, but it will at least break the monotony of the narrative, and preclude for the future the necessity of introducing many detached observations, which, when our extracts become more amusing, would prove a disagreeable interruption to the reader.

To begin with the lower classes of society :

It is generally agreed, that before the Norman conquest, and for a long time after, nearly all the lands of the kingdom were cultivated by serfs, whose situation was, in many respects, scarcely distinguishable from absolute slavery. It may, however, be inferred from the

very curious extract already quoted from Pierce Ploughman, that about the middle of the fourteenth century, and probably much earlier, the labouring poor, though still serfs with respect to their feudal lords, were perfectly free with respect to their immediate employers. The poet says—

“ Labourers that have no land to live on, but *her* hands, &c.—  
But if he be HIGHLY HIRED else will he chide.”

(Pass. vi.)

During a great part of the year, indeed, they were glad to work for a mere subsistence, but when provisions were plentiful, they could only be induced to work at all by the temptation of excessive wages. Against this indolence the author inveighs with great vehemence ; but his remonstrances were probably ineffectual, because a stupid insensibility and a heedless profusion are the natural characteristics of an oppressed and degraded people.

Besides, their conduct seems to have arisen in some measure from the imperfect state of agriculture. Animal food formed a considerable part of the support of the people ; but as the whole of the manure was used on the arable lands, and it was impossible that large numbers of cattle could subsist during the cold season on the natural pastures, they were slaughtered and salted in autumn for a winter provision. This is a reason adduced by Sir John Fortescue for rejecting the gabelle or salt-tax, as a source of revenue for England. “ In France,” says he, “ the people salten but little meat, except their bacon, and therefore they would buy little salt ; but yet they be artyd (*compelled*) to buy more salt than they would.—This rule and order would be sore abhorred in England, as well by the merchants, that be wonted to have their freedom in buying and selling of salt, as by the people, that usen much to salt their meats more than do the French men.” (Fortescue on Monarchy, Cap. X.)

But it appears that, partly from the improvidence usual to a barbarous state of society, and partly from the want of those internal means of communication which tend to diffuse general abundance, these stores of animal food, as well as the grain, were often consumed before the reproduction of a fresh stock. Hence, in the above-mentioned extracts from *Pierce Ploughman*, the poor are represented as reduced to "loaves of beans and bran," and to "feed hunger with beans and baken apples, chyboles, and chervil," until the return of harvest again enabled them to waste their time in idleness and profusion.

Even the farmers themselves, the order to which *Pierce the Ploughman* apparently belonged, do not seem to have fared very sumptuously during some part of the year; for he declares that his whole provision consists in *two green cheeses, some curds and cream, and an oat cake*: but he adds, that *after Lammas he may dight his dinner as he likes*. The particulars of his wealth are *a cow and calf, and a cart-mare*, which he keeps for the purpose of carrying manure upon his land. These articles, perhaps, were designed to give an exact statement of his condition in society; for they seem to agree with what Sir John Fortescue considers as sufficient for the maintenance of a yeoman.

It is very honourable to the good sense of the English nation, that our best two early poets, Chaucer, and the author of *Pierce Ploughman*, have highly extolled this useful body of men, while the French minstrels of the twelfth, thirteenth, and fourteenth centuries universally seem to approve the supercilious contempt with which the nobles affected to treat them. The absurd prejudices of chivalry on this subject are not ill expressed by Lydgate, where he makes Achilles express his apprehensions that—

"In this rage furious and *wood*,  
Full likely is that all the gentle blood

Throughout this worlde shall destroyed be ;  
 And rural folk (and that were great pity)  
 Shall have lordship, and wholly governance :  
 And churles eke, with sorrow and mischance,  
 In every land shall lordes be alone,  
 When gentlemen be slayen each one."

(Cap. XXX. Sign. U ii. ed. Marsh.)

There is a curious chapter in Sir John Fortescue's *Treatise de Laudibus Legum Angliæ*, which seems to prove that the smaller landholders in England usually enjoyed more comforts than, from the general language of historians, we should be led to imagine; for he asserts, that "there is scarce a small village in which you may not find a *knight*, an *esquire*, or some substantial *householder*, commonly called a *frankleyne*; all men of considerable estates: there are others who are called *freeholders*, and many *yeomen* of estates sufficient to make a substantial jury." (Chap. XXIX.) This wealth he attributes principally to the enclosure of our pasture-lands.

The same writer thus describes the comparative poverty of the French common people: "The same commons be so impoverished and destroyed, that they may unneth (*scarcely*) live. They drink water; they eat apples, with bread right brown, made of rye. They eat no flesh, but if it be seldom a little lard, or of the entrails or heads of beasts slain for the nobles and merchants of the land. They wearen no woollen, but if it be a poor coat under their outermost garment, made of great canvass, and call it a frock. Their hosen be of like canvass, and passen not their knee, wherefore they be gartered and their thighs bare. Their wives and children gone barefoot; they may in none otherwise live. For some of them that was wont to pay to his lord for his tenement, which he hireth by the year, a scute (*a crown*), payeth now to the king over that scute, five scutes. Wherethrough they be artyd (*compelled*) by necessity so to watch, labour, and

grub in the ground for their sustenance, that their nature is much wasted, and the kind of them brought to nought. They gone crooked, and are feeble, not able to fight," &c. (Fortescue on Monarchy, Chap. III.)

But though the lower orders of people in England were so advantageously distinguished from those of other nations by a superiority in food and clothing, their domestic buildings seem to have been much inferior to those on the continent; and this inferiority continued even down to the reign of Queen Elizabeth, as appears from the confession of Harrison.

"In old time," says he, "the houses of the Britons were slightly set up with a few posts, and many radeles (*hurdles*), with a stable and all offices under one roof, the like whereof almost is to be seen in the fenny countries and northern parts unto this day, where for lack of wood, they are enforced to continue this ancient manner of building."—"So in the open and champaign countries, they are enforced, for want of stuff, to use no *studs* <sup>1</sup> at all, but only frank-posts,"—"and such principals; with here and there a girding, whereunto they fasten their splints or radels, and then cast it all over with thick clay, to keep out the wind, which otherwise would annoy them. Certes, this rude kind of building made the Spaniards in Queen Mary's days to wonder, but chiefly when they saw what large diet was used in many of these so homely cottages; insomuch that one of no small reputation amongst them said after this manner; 'These English,' quoth he, 'have their houses made of sticks and dirt, but they fare commonly so well as the king.'" (Harrison's Description of England, prefixed to Holinshed, p. 187.)

We have already seen that glazed windows <sup>2</sup> are always

<sup>1</sup> The upright beams. Sax.

<sup>2</sup> Anderson (History of Commerce, vol. i. p. 90, edit. 1764) says, that they were first introduced into England in 1180.

mentioned by our early poets with an air of affectation which evinces their rarity ; so that we are not surprised at being told that the yeomen and farmers were perfectly contented with windows of lattice. Rooms provided with chimneys are also noticed as a luxury by the author of *Pierce Ploughman* : but it is difficult to read with gravity the sagacious observations of Harrison on the ill-consequences attending the enjoyment of warmth without the risk of suffocation. " Now," says he, " have we many chimnies, and yet our tenderlings complain of rheums, catarrhs, and poses (*colds in the head*). Then had we none but *reredosses*<sup>1</sup>, and our heads did never ache. For as the smoke in those days was supposed to be a sufficient hardening for the timber of the house, so it was reputed a far better medicine to keep the good man and his family from the *quacke* (*ague* ?) or *pose* ; wherewith, as then, very few were oft acquainted." (*Description of England*, p. 212.)

After witnessing the indignation which the author has vented against the "*tenderlings*" of his time, the reader may possibly learn with some surprise, that, from the latter end of the thirteenth to near the sixteenth century, persons of all ranks, and of both sexes, were universally in the habit of sleeping quite naked. This custom is often alluded to by Chaucer, Gower, Lydgate, and all our ancient writers. In the *Squire of Low Degree* there is a curious instance :

— " she rose, that lady dear,  
To take her leave of that squyere  
All so naked as she was born,  
She stood her chamber-door before."

(Vers. 671.)

<sup>1</sup> This word is sometimes used to express some *part* of a chimney, and sometimes a substitute for one. It seems to mean a plate of iron, or perhaps a coating of brick, to enable the wall to resist the flame.

In the "*Aresta Amorum*," (Ar. III.), a lady, who had stipulated to throw a nosegay to her lover on a particular night in each week, complains of the difficulty she found in escaping to the window, "*où par fois étoit toute nue par l'espace de deux grosses heures.*" This strange practice prevailed at a time when the day-dress of both sexes was much warmer than at present ; being generally bordered, and often lined, with furs ; insomuch, that numberless warrens were established in the neighbourhood of London for the purpose of supplying its inhabitants with rabbits' skins.

Perhaps it was this warmth of clothing that enabled our ancestors, in defiance of a northern climate, to serenade their mistresses with as much perseverance as if they had lived under the torrid zone. Chaucer thought he had given us the date of his *Dream* with sufficient exactness, when he described it as happening

" About such hour as lovers weep  
And cry after their ladies' grace."  
(Vers. 55.)

In France, as appears from the work already quoted, the lovers were sometimes bound to conduct "*les tabourins et les bas menestriers*" to the doors of their mistresses between midnight and day-break, on every festival throughout the year ; though the principal season for such gallantry was the beginning of May, when the windows were ornamented with pots of marjoram, and may-poles hung with garlands carried through the streets, and raised before every door in succession. This was called *reveiller les pots de mariolaine*, and *planter le mai*. The same season appears to have been chosen by English lovers for the purpose of *crying after their ladies' grace*.

In houses, of which the walls were made of clay, and the floors of the same materials, and where the stabling was under the same roof with the dwelling-rooms, the

furniture was not likely to be costly. Of this the author just quoted received from some ancient neighbours the following description : " Our fathers (yea, and we ourselves also) have lien full oft upon straw pallets, on rough mats, covered only with a sheet, under coverlets maid of *dagswain* or *hopharlots* <sup>1</sup> (I use their own terms), and a good round log under their heads, instead of a bolster or pillow. If it were so that our fathers, or the good man of the house, had, within seven years after his marriage, purchased a mattress or flock bed, and thereto a sack of chaff to rest his head upon, he thought himself to be as well lodged as the lord of the town ; that, peradventure, lay seldom in a bed of down or whole feathers." — " As for servants, if they had any sheet above them, it was well ; for seldom had they any under their bodies, to keep them from the pricking straws than ran oft through the canvas of the pallet, and rased their hardened hides." (p. 188.)

The progress of improvement in building was from clay to lath and plaster, which was formed into pannels between the principal timbers ; to floors or *pargets* (as Harrison calls them, i. e. *parquets*) coated with plaster of Paris ; and to ceilings overlaid with mortar and washed with lime or plaster " of delectable whiteness." Country houses were generally covered with shingles ; but in towns the danger of fires obliged the inhabitants to adopt the use of tile or slate. These latter buildings were very solid, and consisted of many stories projecting over each other, so that the windows on opposite sides of the street nearly met. " The walls of our houses on the inner sides (says Harrison),—be either hanged with tapestry, arraswork, or painted cloths, wherein either

<sup>1</sup> *dag*. Sax. (from whence *daggle* or *draggle*) any thing pendent, a *shred*. The term, therefore, seems to mean any *patched materials*, like those worn by the poorest country people.



divers histories, or herbs, beasts, knots, and such like, are stained, or else they are seeled with oak of our own, or wainscot brought hither out of the east countries." (P. 187.) This relates, of course, to the houses of the wealthy, which he also represents as abounding in plate and pewter. In earlier times, wooden platters, bowls, and drinking vessels were universally used, excepting in the houses of the nobles. In France, if we may believe M. de Paulmy (*Vie privée des François*), slices of bread, called "*pains tranchoirs*," were used as a substitute for plates till the reign of Louis XII.<sup>1</sup>

Though our readers are not likely to be much enamoured with Lydgate's poetry, they will perhaps pardon the following extract from his "London Lyckpenny<sup>2</sup>," (Harl. MSS. 367,) in favour of some curious particulars which it contains respecting the city of London. The entire poem is to be found in Mr. Strutt's *View of Manners, &c.* vol. iii. p. 59, &c., in which, however, there are some trifling errors. Lydgate supposes himself to have come to town in search of legal redress for some wrong, and to have visited successively the King's Bench, the Court of Common Pleas, the Court of Chancery, and Westminster Hall.

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Ritson observes ("Ancient English Metrical Romanceës," iii. 432,) that "M. Le Grand d'Ausfy—and not, as mister Ellis says, M. de Paumy),—was the author of '*La vie privée des François*,' which has even his name in the title-page." If Mr. Ritson had been as well read in Mr. Le Grand's work as he is in the title page, he would have known that this was not the book I meant to quote: and if he will turn to the "*Mélanges d'une grande Bibliothèque*," generally attributed to M. de Paulmy, he will find, in p. 114 of vol. iii. containing "*La Vie privée des François*," the passage I did quote.

<sup>2</sup> "Some call London a *lick-penny* (as Paris is called, by some, a *pickpurse*) because of feastings, with other occasions of expense and allurements, which cause so many unthrifths among country gentlemen, and others, who flock into her in such excessive multitudes." Howell's *Londinopolis*, p. 406.

\*            \*            \*            \*

Within the hall, neither rich, nor yet poor  
Would do for me ought, although I should die :  
Which seeing, I gat me out of the door,  
Where Flemings began on me for to cry,  
“ Master, what will you *copen*<sup>1</sup> or buy ?  
Fine felt hats ? or spectacles to read ?  
Lay down your silver, and here you may speed.”

Then to Westminster gate I presently went,  
When the sun was at high prime :  
Cooks to me they took good *intent*<sup>2</sup>,  
And proffered me bread, with ale, and wine,  
Ribbs of beef, both fat and full fine ;  
A fair cloth they gan for to spread,  
But, wanting money, I might not be sped.

Then unto London I did me hie,  
Of all the land it beareth the price ;  
“ Hot peascods !” one began to cry,  
“ Strawberry ripe, and cherries *in the ryse*<sup>3</sup> !”  
One bade me come near and buy some spice ;  
Pepper, and saffron they gan me *bede*<sup>4</sup> ;  
But, for lack of money, I might not speed.

Then to the Cheap I gan me drawn,  
Where much people I saw for to stand ;

<sup>1</sup> *Koopen*, Flem. is to buy.

<sup>3</sup> On the twig.

<sup>2</sup> Took notice, paid attention.

<sup>4</sup> Bid.

One offered me velvet, silk, and lawn,  
 Another he taketh me by the hand,  
 "Here is Paris thread, the finest in the land!"  
 I never was used to such things, indeed;  
 And, wanting money, I might not speed.

Then went I forth by *London stone*<sup>1</sup>,  
 Throughout all *Canwyke* street:  
 Drapers much cloth me offered anon;  
 Then comes me one cried "hot sheep's feet;"  
 One cried mackerel, *rysses green*<sup>2</sup> another gan  
*greet*<sup>3</sup>,  
 One bade me buy a hood to cover my head;  
 But, for want of money, I might not be sped.

Then I hied me unto East-Cheap,  
 One cries ribs of beef, and many a pie;  
 Pewter pots they clattered on a heap;  
 There was harp, pipe, and minstrelsy;  
 Yea by cock! nay by cock! some began cry;  
 Some sung of Jenken and Julyan for their meed;  
 But, for lack of money, I might not speed.

Then into Cornhill anon I *yode*,  
 Where was much stolen gear: among  
 I saw where hung mine owne hood,

<sup>1</sup> A fragment of London stone is still preserved in Cannon-street, formerly called Canwick, or Candlewick-street. Stowe, in his account of Candlewick Ward, refers to this ballad.

Green rushes.

<sup>3</sup> Cry.

That I had lost among the throng ;  
 To buy my own hood I thought it wrong :  
 I knew it, well as I did my creed ;  
 But, for lack of money, I could not speed.

The taverner took me by the sleeve,  
 " Sir," saith he, " will you our wine assay ?"  
 I answered, " that can not much me grieve,  
 A penny can do no more than it may ;"  
 I drank a pint, and for it did pay ;  
 Yet, sore a-hungred from thence I yede,  
 And, wanting money, I could not speed, &c.

Lydgate has here ridiculed, with more pleasantry than usually belongs to him, the importunate civility of the lower tradesmen. The attraction of customers seems to have been by the more opulent shopkeepers assigned to their apprentices ; for *Perkin*, a French physician, who visited England in the reign of Edward VI., says, " Vous verrez à Londres des apprentifs avec des robes contre leurs boutiques, nuds têtes, et contre les murailles de leurs maisons ; tellement, qu'en passant parmi les rues, vous en trouverez cinquante ou soixante contre les murailles, *comme idoles*, ayant leurs bonnets à la main<sup>1</sup>." He seems to have been much surprised at our shops, which he says are *always open like those of the barbers in France, and have glass windows, generally adorned with pots of flowers* ; but he particularly notices the wealth of the tavern-keepers, and the neatness of their rooms ; for he says, " aux tavernes (vous verrez) force foin dessus les planchers de bois<sup>2</sup>, et force oreillers et tapisseries sur

<sup>1</sup> "Description des Royaulmes d'Angleterre et d'Escoce. Par. 1558." Reprinted with notes, Lond. 1775, 4to.

<sup>2</sup> Erasmus, in a letter to Franciscus, Wolsey's physician, ascribes

lesquels les voyageurs se assisent (*asseient*).” This practice of spreading hay or rushes on the floors seems to have been at least coeval with the arrival of the Normans. Carpets<sup>1</sup>, though introduced as early as the Crusades, were hitherto only used as coverings for chairs, or for tables, particularly for side-boards, or (as our ancestors called them) *cup-boardes*<sup>2</sup>, on which their plate or pewter was exhibited.

The stately castles of our nobility do not require any description here; because, having been intended for the purpose of resisting the attacks of an enemy, they were constructed with such solidity as to survive the depredations of time; and are, in some instances, preserved to the present day with little alteration in their external ap-

pearance (then very common in England) and the sweating sickness, to the sluttishness which this custom tended to perpetuate. The floors, he says, are commonly of clay, strewed with rushes; under which lies unmolested a putrid mixture of beer, stinking fragments of food, and all sorts of nastiness. He also censures the filth of our streets, and even the construction of our houses, the rooms of which ought to have, as he thinks, some windows in every direction. He farther complains, that these windows, though they excluded the wind, admitted unwholesome currents of air. To explain this part of his letter, which is rather obscure, it may be proper to observe, that the illuminations in many MSS. represent the windows as composed of three compartments, of which the lowest consisted of a close lattice-work, the upper of glass, while the central compartment was quite open. Two-thirds only of these windows were usually closed with shutters, the upper part being left for the admission of light. Such a partial shelter could not so totally exclude the air as to satisfy such an invalid as Erasmus. (See Jortin's Life of Erasmus, vol. ii. p. 341.)

<sup>1</sup> Gilt and painted leather, being often applied to the same purposes as a carpet, was frequently called by the same name. Among the goods belonging to Henry V., and sold to pay his debts, were some “carpetz de cuir,” valued at 3s. 4d. the piece. (Rolls of Parl. A.D. 1423.)

<sup>2</sup> In the inventory of furniture belonging to the bedchamber of Henry VIII. at Hampton Court, were two *joined cupboards*.—Item, one *joyned-stool*, &c. (Strutt's Manners, &c. vol. iii. p. 69.)

pearance. Their interior furniture, indeed, was of a more perishable nature : but a few oaken benches and tables, raised on strong trestles, sometimes morticed into the floor, and sometimes with folding legs, a bed, a pair of andirons, or dogs, with their accompaniment of tongs, or a chafer (chafing-dish,) generally formed the whole inventory of the best furnished apartment.

When we consider our great feudal barons, inhabiting their solitary "*dungeons*," without the use of letters, or the comforts of that mixed society which civilization has gradually introduced, we shall at first be tempted to suspect that the "*sadness of demeanour*," which was the characteristic of good breeding, arose from the dullness and uniformity of their lives. Yet the list of their amusements, though differing in some particulars from those of their successors, was extremely numerous. Much time must have been dedicated to the practice of fighting, both in jest and in earnest ; because romance is principally employed in describing the one, and history contains little more than their exploits in the other. The *mystery of the woods*, or science of hunting, required no less study of mind and labour of body than the conduct of a military expedition ; and, at a time of the year when venison was the only fresh meat that could be procured, it was, perhaps, a necessary occupation. Hawking, or the *mystery of rivers*, by which they principally supplied their tables with wild fowl, and which required little preparation, was an almost daily source of amusement ; and when the weather was such as to preclude the possibility of these exercises, there still remained the sedentary recreations of chess, back-gammon, and various other games on the *tables*, music, dancing, questions of love, and stories of past, or the anticipation of future tournaments.

But a very principal business of life was eating and drinking. It is true, that for some time after the conquest, the Norman nobles were satisfied with two mo-

derate meals in a day ; but it was at length discovered that no less than five might, without much inconvenience, be introduced into the same period ; and that three hours were by no means too long for the principal meal, allowing for the ceremonies of *washing*<sup>1</sup>, of marshalling the guests and the dishes, and listening to the tales or music of the minstrels. Public suppers were generally followed by dancing<sup>2</sup>, and that by the rear-supper, or collation, consisting of spiced cakes and medicated wines.

In all the above-mentioned amusements (war and tilt-ing only excepted) the ladies appear to have participated : indeed, their will was the motive of every action. And hence, while the stouter knights were exchanging wounds

<sup>1</sup> It seems that the whole company washed in succession, and that it was usual for the mistress of the house to lead out for this purpose the guest whom she particularly wished to distinguish. In the fabliaux of *Le chevalier qui faisoit parler*, &c. the author says—

Et la comtesse pour laver  
Prit par les mains le chevalier,  
\* \* \* \* \*  
Et puis le comte, et les pucelles,  
Les dames, et les demoiselles  
Lavent après, et l'autre gent.

<sup>2</sup> In the same fabliaux it is said—

Avint qu'il fut tems de souper,  
Si s'en rallerent, pair-à-pair,  
Si comme au matin s'asseoir.  
Moult furent bien servis le soir  
De viandes à grant plenté  
Et de vins à leur volonté.  
Après manger chacun commence  
De faire caroles et danses,  
Tant qu'il fut heure de coucher.  
Paris emmenent le chevalier  
En sa chambre, où fait fut son lit ;  
Et là, burent par grant delit,  
Puis prirent congé, &c.

and bruises for their diversion, the less valorous courtiers were employed in devising those astonishing varieties of dress and changes of fashion which distinguished the fourteenth century, to the great scandal of our simple historians, who deplored the waste of time and money, and the distortion of the human shape, produced by modes so "destitute and desert from all old honest and good usage." The pointed shoes, the trailing sleeves, the party-coloured doublets and mantles, and indecorous hose of the men, and the horned-caps, and strait-laced bodices, or stays, of the women, are mentioned by many historians with pious horror<sup>1</sup>. The monk of Glastonbury tells us they wore such strait clothes, that they had long fox tails sewed under their garments, to hold them forth; and, in his indignation against such an insidious species of lining, exclaims—"the which disguisings, and pride, peradventure, afterwards brought forth and caused many mishaps and mischief in the realm of England." (Caxton's Chronicle.)

One of our old minstrels, author of a romance called "*The Squyr of Low Degre*," having contrived to enumerate, within a tolerably moderate compass, all the amusements known to the fair sex during the middle ages, it may not be amiss to transcribe the whole passage (as Mr. Warton has already done), because the book, though

<sup>1</sup> The most pernicious fashion in use amongst the women of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries was that of painting. But it may be hoped that it was confined (as it is in Russia) to the lower ranks of the community. In a *servente*, written in ridicule of old ladies, by Augier, a troubadour of the twelfth century, he says, "Je ne peux souffrir le teint blanc et rouge que les vieilles se font avec l'onguent d'un œuf battu, qu'elles s'appliquent sur le visage, et du blanc pardessus." Hist. Litt. des Troubadours, tom. i. p. 345. It appears, from another piece cited in the same work (tom. iii. p. 167), that the ladies used a mixture of quicksilver and various drugs for painting, as well as the common red and white.



printed, is extremely scarce <sup>1</sup>. The heroine of the piece, a daughter of the king of Hungary, being plunged (in consequence of her love for the squire) in a deep melancholy, the king, her father, endeavours to enliven her imagination by presenting to her the following picture of the amusements that he intends to procure for her :

“ To-morrow ye shall on hunting fare,  
And ride, my daughter, in a *chare* <sup>2</sup> ;  
It shall be cover'd with velvet red,  
And clothes of fine gold all about your head,  
With damask white, and azure blue,  
Well *diaper'd* <sup>3</sup> with lilies new.  
Your *pomelles* <sup>4</sup> shall be ended with gold,  
Your chains enamell'd, many a fold ;  
Your mantle of rich degree,  
Purple *pall* <sup>5</sup>, and ermine *free* <sup>6</sup>.

“ Jennets of Spain that ben so white,  
Trapp'd to the ground with velvet bright.

<sup>1</sup> No MS. of it has been seen, and the only printed copy known to exist is among Mr. Garrick's old plays in the British Museum, from which, however, it is now published entire in Mr. Ritson's collection, and the subsequent extract has been corrected after his copy.

<sup>2</sup> Car, or chariot.

<sup>3</sup> Variegated.

<sup>4</sup> *Pomel* is interpreted by La Combe, “*sorte d'ornement aux habits d'église*.” Mr. Ritson defines *pomels* “balls, apples.”

<sup>5</sup> “Fine cloth, use'd for the robes of kings, princeës, and persons of rank or consequence : generally *purpel* or *purpur*.”—In Langham's Letter, 1575, we meet with “a pall of white silk.” “It is now confined to velvet, blackness, and funeral processions.” (Ritson.)

<sup>6</sup> Noble.

Ye shall have harp, psaltry, and song,  
And other mirthes you among.

Ye shall have *Rumney*<sup>1</sup>, and *Malmesyne*<sup>2</sup>,  
Both *Ypocrasse*, and *Vernage*<sup>3</sup> wine,  
*Mount rose*<sup>4</sup>, and wine Greek<sup>5</sup>  
Both *Algrade*<sup>6</sup>, and *Respice*<sup>7</sup> eke,  
Antioche and *Bastarde*<sup>8</sup>,  
*Pyment*<sup>9</sup> also, and *Garnard*<sup>10</sup>,  
Wine of Greek, and *Muscadell*<sup>11</sup>,  
Both *Claré*<sup>12</sup>, *Pyment*, and *Rochell*<sup>13</sup>:  
The red, your stomach to *defy*<sup>14</sup>,  
And pots of *osey*<sup>15</sup> set you by.

<sup>1</sup> Wine of Romanée, in Burgundy.

<sup>2</sup> Malmsey, *malvoisie*. Fr.

<sup>3</sup> Wine of Vernou, in Touraine.

<sup>4</sup> Perhaps wine of Montrachet, near Beaume; still in estimation.

<sup>5</sup> "*Le vin Grec* is mentioned by *M. Le Grand d'Ausfy*." (Ritson.)

<sup>6</sup> Does this mean Spanish wine, from Algarva?

<sup>7</sup> "A wine now unknown." (Ritson.) Query, *d'espice*, vin d'espices?

<sup>8</sup> Junius calls vinum passum (i. e. raisin wine) vin bastard. Harrison mentions it as a strong wine, and good for digestion. Mr. Ritson says *Bastarde* is "a wine of Corsica, so call'd, as is conjecture'd, from being mix'd with honey. It was a common beverage in London, so late as Shakspeare's time."

<sup>9</sup> "Artificial wine, resembling clary or hippocras; a mixture, that is, of wine, honey, and spicees." (Ritson.)

<sup>10</sup> Does this mean choice wine? wine kept in the *garner*, or warehouse? Mr. Ritson explains it "a wine of *Granada*."

<sup>11</sup> "A French wine." (Ritson.)

<sup>12</sup> "*Clary*, a mixture of wine and honey: *clairret*. F." (Ritson.)

<sup>13</sup> Wine of Rochelle.

<sup>14</sup> Defend? *Deffaux*, in old Fr. is defence (V. La Combe).

<sup>15</sup> Query *oseille*? (sorrel.)

You shall have venison y-bake ;  
 The best wild-fowl that may be take ;  
 A leash of grey-hounds with you to strike,  
 And hart and hind, and other like.  
 Ye shall be set at such a *tryst* <sup>1</sup>,  
 That hart and hind shall come to your fist ;  
 Your disease to drive you fro,  
 To hear the bugles there y-blow.

\* \* \* \* \*  
 Homeward thus shall ye ride  
 On hawking by the rivers side,  
 With gos-hawk, and with gentil falcon,  
 With *eglehorn* <sup>2</sup>, and *merlyon* <sup>3</sup>.  
 When you come home your men among,  
 Ye shall have revel, dances, and song ;  
 Little children great and smale  
 Shall sing as doth the nightingale.

Then shall ye go to your even song,  
 With tenours and trebles among,  
 Three score of copes of damask bright  
 Full of pearls they shall be *pyght* <sup>4</sup>.

\* \* \* \* \*  
 Your censers shall be of gold,  
 Indent with azure, many a fold.

<sup>1</sup> A post, or station, in hunting. Tyrwhitt's Gloss.

<sup>2</sup> "An *egkyl* appears to be a species of hawk : see Strutt's *Manners*, &c. iii. 124." (Ritson.)

<sup>3</sup> "*Merlin*, a species of hawk ; *emerillon*. F." (Ritson.)

<sup>4</sup> Sewed or quilted ; *piqué*. Fr.

Your choir nor organ-song shall want  
 With counter-note and descant,  
 The other half on organs playing,  
 With young children full fair singing.

Then shall ye go to your suppers,  
 And sit in tents in green arbère,  
 With cloths of Arras *pyght* to the ground,  
 With sapphires set, and diamond.

\* \* \* \* \*  
 An hundred knightes, truly told,  
 Shall play with bowls in alleys cold,  
 Your disease to drive away.

To see the fishes in pools play,  
 \* \* \* \* \*  
 To a draw-bridge then shall ye,  
 The one half of stone, the other of tree,  
 A barge shall meet you full right,  
 With twenty-four oars full bright,  
 With trumpets and with clarion,  
 The fresh water to row up and down.

\* \* \* \* \*  
 “ Then shall ye, daughter, ask the wine,  
 With spices that be good and fine,  
 Gentil pots with ginger green,  
 With dates and dainties you between.

Forty torches *brenyng* bright,  
 At your bridges to bring you light,  
 Into your chamber they shall you bring  
 With much mirth and more likyng.

\* \* \* \*

"Your blankets shall be of *fustayne*<sup>1</sup>,  
 Your sheets shall be of cloth of *rayne*<sup>2</sup>,  
 Your head-sheet shall be of *pery*<sup>3</sup> *pyght*,  
 With diamond set, and rubies bright.

"When you are laid in bed so soft,  
 A cage of gold shall hang aloft,  
 With long-pepper fair burning,  
 And cloves that be sweet smelling,  
 Frankincense and olibanum,  
 That when ye sleep the taste may come.  
 And, if ye no rest may take,  
 All night minstrels for you shall wake."

A modern princess might possibly object to breathing the smoke of pepper, cloves, and frankincense during her sleep; but the fondness of our ancestors for these, and indeed for perfumes of all kinds, was excessive. We have

<sup>1</sup> *Fustaine*, or *futaine*, Fr. is a thick cotton cloth, of which coverlets are still commonly made.

<sup>2</sup> Of Rennes in Brittany, "This cloth is noticed by Chaucer for its particular softness." (Ritson.)

<sup>3</sup> Embroidered with precious stones.

seen that Lydgate thought it necessary that Venus, when rising from the sea, should be *enointe with gums and ointments sweeter for to smell*; and Martial d'Auvergne, a celebrated French poet of the fifteenth century, in his prologue to the *Aresta Amorum* (Decrees of the Court of Love,) observes of the lady-judges of that court, that—

Leurs habits sentoient le cyprès  
Et le musc si abondamment,  
Que l'on n'eut su être au plus près  
*Sans eternuer largement.*

Outre plus, en lieu d'herbe verd,  
Qu'on a accoustumé d'espandre,  
Tout le parquet etoit couvert  
De romarin et de lavandre.

In the foregoing description of diversions the good king of Hungary has forgotten one, which seems to have been as great a favourite with the English and French as it ever was with the Turkish ladies. This is the bath. It was considered, and with great reason, as the best of all cosmetics; and Mr. Strutt has extracted from an old MS. of prognostications, written in the time of Richard II., a medical caution to the women, against “going to the bath *for beauty*” during the months of March and November. But it seems also to have been usual for women to bathe together for the purpose of conversation: for in the fabliau of Constant du Hamel (in Barbazan's collection) an invitation for this purpose occurs to the wife as the most natural device for effecting her purpose, and her three female friends are successfully the dupes of the artifice. The generality<sup>1</sup> of the fabliaux, however, while

<sup>1</sup> See Le Grand, tom. iii. p. 455; tom. iv. p. 175, 232. Promise

they prove that baths, or at least bathing-tubs, were to be found even in the houses of the poorest tradesmen, evince also that they were not always very innocently employed ; and those of public resort became so infamous, that their very names are expressive of debauchery.

The reader may possibly be of opinion that the spectacle of an hundred knights playing at bowls "*in alleys cold*," would not be so amusing as even the simplest kind of theatrical representations ; and as *mysteries*, or miracle-plays, are mentioned by Chaucer's Wife of Bath as a common and fashionable diversion, it may be thought that one of these might have been advantageously substituted for the regiment of bowling knights. But the mysteries were for a long time exhibited only on stated festivals ; they were performed solely by ecclesiastics ; they required considerable preparation ; and there did not exist in England (the only country which seems to have been known to the author of the romance) any company of actors, at the disposal of the court, till after the middle of the sixteenth century.

Mr. Warton, in his History of Poetry, has taken great pains to discover the origin, and trace the progress of theatrical entertainments in Europe ; and though the subject is much too extensive for the present work, it may be worth while to present to the reader what seems to be the general outline of his opinion.

cuous bathing is also exhibited in some of the early specimens of engraving, in which women are often represented as attending men to the bath, as they still do at Berne. Wenceslaus, emperor and king of Bohemia, who died in 1418, was much attached to the bathing girl who attended him during his captivity, and for whose sake he is said to have bestowed many privileges and immunities on the owners of the baths at Baden. Her picture occurs very frequently in a finely illuminated bible, written at his instance, and still preserved in the Imperial library at Vienna. This anecdote is mentioned by Lambecius in his account of that library.

He observes that, as early as the fourth century, Gregory Nazianzen, an archbishop and poet, with a view of banishing pagan plays from the theatre of Constantinople, had composed many sacred dramas, intended to be substituted for the Greek tragedies, with hymns in lieu of the chorus. Whatever may have been the result of this first struggle between piety and taste, a second project of a similar nature is stated to have been successful. Theophylact, another patriarch, invented or adopted, about the year 990, a sort of religious pantomimes and farces, since known by the names of *Fête des Fous*, *Fête de l'Âne*, *Fête des Innocents*, &c., in the hopes of weaning the people from the Bacchanalian and calendary rites, and other pagan ceremonies, by the substitution of Christian spectacles. These farces, passing first into Italy, suggested the composition of *mysteries*, which from thence found their way into France and the rest of Europe; and were every where eagerly adopted by the clergy, who were glad to have in their own hands the direction of a popular amusement, capable of rivalling the scandalous pantomimes and buffooneries hitherto exhibited at fairs by the jugglers and itinerant minstrels, whom the merchants carried with them for the purpose of attracting customers.

A sort of miracle play, or mystery, is said to have been acted in England by the monks of the abbey of Dunstable in the eleventh century. This was the famous play of *the Death of St. Catherine*. At this time, the only persons who could read were ecclesiastics; but, as learning increased, the practice of acting these plays migrated from the monasteries to the universities, which were formed on a monastic plan, and in many respects resembled the ecclesiastical bodies. In the statutes of Trinity-hall, Cambridge, an *Imperator*, or *prefectus ludorum* (master of the revels), is ordered to be appointed, for the purpose of superintending the amusements and plays at



Christmas ; and a *Christmas-prince*, or *lord of misrule*, corresponding to the *Imperator* at Cambridge, was a common temporary magistrate at Oxford.

The same practice was afterwards introduced into our schools, and from hence into the companies of singing-boys in the choirs, and the law societies. All Lyly's plays, and many of Jonson's and Shakspeare's, were acted by the children of the Chapel-royal, assisted by those of St. Paul's. "Ferrex and Porrex" was acted in 1561, by the gentlemen of the Inner Temple, and Gascoigne's "Supposes" in 1566, by those of Gray's-inn.

It may be proper to observe, that this sketch, though possibly correct in general, is by no means so in respect to France ; for it appears, that a regular company of players was established at Paris by a *règlement* of Charles VI. in December 1402, under the title of *Les Confreres de la Passion*. It is said to have been founded by a set of pilgrims returning from the Holy Land, who used to assemble in the public squares to chant, in several parts, the miracles of the Virgin. This company was succeeded during the same reign by a new one, composed of lawyers' clerks belonging to the *Parlement* and the *Chatelet*, under the direction of a manager, who called himself *le Prince des Sots*, and began to exhibit a new and burlesque species of entertainments, which, under the successive names of *Sotties*, *Pois-pilés*, and lastly *Farces*, continued in fashion till the time of Moliere.

## CHAPTER XIV.

*Reigns of Henry VI., Edward IV. and V. (1422—1471.)*

HUGH DE CAMPEDEN. — THOMAS CHESTRE. — SCOTTISH POETS. — CLERK OF TRANENT. — HOLLAND. — HENRY THE MINSTREL. — REIGNS OF EDWARD IV. AND V. — HARDING. — SCOGAN. — NORTON. — RIPLEY. — LADY JULIANA BERNERS. — WILLIAM OF NASSYNGTON. — LORD RIVERS. — SCOTTISH POETS. — ROBERT HENRYSOUN. — PATRICK JOHNSTOUN — AND MERSAR.

THE only poets who can be assigned, with any certainty, to the reign of Henry VI., are HUGH DE CAMPEDEN and THOMAS CHESTRE, both of whom are only known to us as translators; the former having turned into English verse the romance of *Sidrac*, and the latter *the Lay of Launval*, composed, or rather paraphrased, from the Breton original, by Mademoiselle *Marie*, a French poetess of the twelfth century.

The romance of *Sidrac*<sup>1</sup> is represented by Mr. Warton as a compendium of Arabian philosophy, rather than a fable of chivalry; and Campeden's translation as exhibiting "no sort of elegance in the diction, nor harmony in the versification." Chestre's work, on the contrary, besides being very fanciful and entertaining, appears to be written by an experienced versifier; because the six-lined stanza in which it is composed, has not in any

<sup>1</sup> "The history of kyng Boccus and Sydracke," &c., London, printed by Godfray, 1510, 4to. Mr. Ritson (Bibl. Poet.) says that MS. copies are not uncommon. There is one in the Bodleian, and another in the British Museum.

degree fettered his expression, which is very generally natural and easy as well as picturesque. It is unnecessary, however, to give any extract from this poem, as it has been very lately submitted to the public in the Appendix to Mr. Way's translation of the *Fabliaux* (Faulder, 1800<sup>1</sup>). Mr. Warton suspects that the *Earl of Thoulouse*, a metrical romance, of which he has given the analysis (*Hist. Eng. P.* vol. II. p. 103), may also have been translated by Chestre; but Mr. Ritson, who has printed it in his collection, is of a different opinion.

The dearth of names in our poetical catalogue towards the middle of the fifteenth century is not a proof that the art of poetry was at this time very little cultivated. The contrary, indeed, is most probably true; because many of the old ballads preserved in Percy's *Reliques of Ancient English Poetry*, several of the metrical romances, of which a large collection still remains in manuscript in our public libraries, and the greater part of the fabulous stories of *Robin Hood*, as well as the tales of *Gamelyn* and of *Beryn*, so long attributed to Chaucer, appear to belong to this period. But though Henry VI. was likely to be the patron of a talent to which he had himself some pretensions<sup>2</sup>, the general despondence and discontent which

<sup>1</sup> It may now be read to the utmost advantage in Mr. Ritson's collection of *Ancient English Romances*, where it is printed (no doubt) with scrupulous fidelity.

<sup>2</sup> In the *Nugæ Antiquæ* the following wretched lines are ascribed to this wretched prince:

Kingdoms are but cares;  
State is devoid of stay;  
Riches are ready snares,  
And hasten to decay.

Pleasure is a privy prick  
Which vice doth still provoke;  
Pomp unprompt; and fame a flame;  
Power a smouldering smoke.

prevailed during a great part of his reign, could not but discourage men of rank and learning from employing their leisure in works of imagination.

In Scotland, on the contrary, the progress of poetry seems to have been uninterrupted; for Dunbar has enumerated no less than eighteen distinguished "makers," many of whom must have flourished as early as the middle of the fifteenth century. One of these, CLERK OF TRANENT, is celebrated as the author of *the Adventures of Sir Gawain*, a romance, of which two cantos appear to be preserved. They are written in stanzas of thirteen lines, with alternate rhymes, and much alliteration; and in a language so very obsolete as to be often quite unintelligible. There is, however, a sort of wildness in the narrative which is very striking. (Vide Pinkerton's *Scottish Poems*, 3 vols. 1792.)

Another Scottish Poet, of the name of HOLLAND, has left an allegorical satire called *The Houlat* (the Owl), composed in the same metre with the preceding, and in language equally obscure, but far less beautiful. Mr.

Who meaneth to remove the rock  
Out of the slimy mud,  
Shall mire himself, and hardly scape  
The swelling of the flood.

This "prettie verse," as Sir John Harrington calls it, must have been known to Baldwin, the first compiler of *the Mirror for Magistrates*, who, in his *Tragedy of King Henry VI.*, puts the following reflection (being the royal language, it appears, almost verbatim) into the mouth of that unfortunate monarch:—

"Our kingdoms are but cares, our state devoid of stay,  
Our riches ready snares, to hasten our decay:  
Our pleasures privy pricks, our vices to provoke,  
Our pomp a pump, our fame a flame, our power a smouldering  
smoke."

For the ingenious comparison of *pomp* to a *pump* Baldwin, and not poor King Henry, must be answerable.

Warton seems to have proved that it was written before 1455. (See the same collection.)

But the most interesting composition of this period is the celebrated metrical *History of Sir William Wallace*, written by a poet whose surname is not known, but who is distinguished by the familiar appellation of HENRY THE MINSTREL, and BLIND HARRY. "The date of his book," according to the account prefixed to the edition printed at Perth, 1790, "and consequently the age in which he lived, may be exactly ascertained. '*In the time of my infancy,*' says Major, '*Henry, who was blind from his birth, composed a book consisting entirely of the Achievements of William Wallace.*' Major was born at North Berwick, in East Lothian, in 1446. It was, therefore, about the year 1446, that Henry wrote or made public his entire history of Wallace." From the same account it appears that he was a kind of itinerant minstrel, and that "by reciting his histories before princes or great men, he gained his food and raiment, of which," says Major very justly, "he was worthy."

That a man *born* blind should excel in any science is sufficiently extraordinary, though by no means without example; but that he should become an excellent poet is almost miraculous; because the soul of poetry is description. Perhaps, therefore, it may be easily assumed, that Henry was not inferior in point of genius either to Barbour or Chaucer, nor indeed to any poet of any age or country: but it is our present business to estimate the merit of the work rather than the genius of the author.

The similarity of the subject will naturally induce every reader to compare the life of Wallace with Barbour's life of Bruce; and on such a comparison, it will probably be found that Henry excels his competitor in correctness of versification, and, perhaps, in perspicuity of language (for both of which he was indebted to the gradual improvements which had taken place during near

a century); but that in every other particular he is greatly inferior to his predecessor. Though Henry did not invent what he relates, but probably employed such materials as he believed to be authentic; and though this may serve as a general excuse for many exaggerations and false facts, and, among the rest, for his carrying Wallace, at the head of a victorious army, to dictate a peace at St. Alban's; yet, to represent the fierce and politic Edward I. trembling for his safety in the Tower of London, weeping over the body of his nephew, and sending his queen to supplicate for a disgraceful peace,—is to confound all our ideas of historical characters, and to disgust the reader with useless improbability.

The Bruce is evidently the work of a politician as well as poet. The characters of a king, of his brother, of Douglas, and of the Earl of Moray, are discriminated, and their separate talents always employed with judgment; so that every event is prepared and rendered probable by the means to which it is to be attributed: whereas the life of Wallace is a mere romance, in which the hero hews down whole squadrons with his single arm, and is indebted for every victory to his own muscular strength. Both poems are filled with descriptions of battles; but in those of Barbour our attention is successively directed to the cool intrepidity of King Robert, to the brilliant rashness of Edward Bruce, or to the enterprising stratagems of Douglas: while in Henry we find little more than a disgusting picture of revenge, hatred, and blood.

Still, however, it must be confessed that the life of Wallace is a work of very great poetical merit. The following extracts are chosen as specimens of our author's style in different kinds of description: the first representing a visionary spectre seen by Wallace soon after he had put to death one of his own partisans, (of the name of Fawdoun,) whom he suspected of treachery. The

scene is a solitary castle, called *Gask Hall*, at which Wallace arrived with a few partisans, after a very distressing retreat.

In the Gask Hall their lodging have they taen;  
 Fire gat they soon, but meat *than* had they *nane*.  
*Twa* sheep they took beside them off a fold;  
 Ordain'd to sup *into* that seemly hold,  
*Graithit*<sup>1</sup> in haste some food for them to dight:  
 So heard they *blaw* rude hornis upon height.  
*Twa* sent he forth to look what it might be;  
 They 'bade right *lang*,—and no tidings heard he,  
 But *boustous*<sup>2</sup> noise so *brymly*<sup>3</sup> blew<sup>4</sup> and fast.  
 So other *twa* into the wood forth past.  
*Nane* come again; but *boustously* can *blaw*:  
*Into* great hire he sent them forth *on raw*<sup>5</sup>.  
 When he<sup>6</sup> *alane* Wallace was leavyt there,  
 The awful blast aboundyt mickle *mair*:  
*Than trewit*<sup>7</sup> he *weill they*<sup>8</sup> had his lodging seen,  
 His sword he drew of noble metal keen,  
*Syne* forth he went where that he heard the horn.  
 Without the door Fawdoun was him befor,

<sup>1</sup> Made ready.

<sup>2</sup> Huge, boisterous? It seems to come from the Goth. *buss*, "cum impetu ferri." Vid. Ihre Gloss.

<sup>3</sup> Fiercely. Ruddiman's Gloss.

<sup>4</sup> So MS.—Ed. 1790, *blow*.

<sup>5</sup> In a row, altogether. The edit. 1685 has *in row*.

<sup>6</sup> So MS.—Ed. 1790, *that*.

<sup>7</sup> Believed.

<sup>8</sup> i. e. the enemy.

(As till his sight) his *awn* head in his hand.  
 A cross he made, when he saw him so stand.  
 At Wallace in the head he *swaket yare* <sup>1</sup>,  
 And he in haste soon *hynt* <sup>2</sup> [it] by the hair,  
*Syne* out at him again he *couth* it cast,  
*Intill* his heart he was greatly aghast.  
 Right *weill* he trowit that was *na spreit* of man;  
 It was some devil that *sic* malice began;  
 He wist *na weill* there *langer* for to bide:  
 Up through the hall thus *wycht* <sup>3</sup> Wallace can glide  
 To a close stair—the boardis *raiff* <sup>4</sup> in twin:  
 Fifteen foot large he *lap* out of that inn.  
 Up the water suddenly he *couth* fare;  
 Again he *blent* <sup>5</sup> what 'perance he saw there;  
 He thought he saw Fawdoun, that ugly sire,  
 That *haill* <sup>6</sup> hall he had set in a fire <sup>7</sup>;  
 A great rafter he had *intill* his hand;  
 Wallace as *than* no *langer* would he stand.  
 Of his good men full great mervail had he,  
 How they were *tynt* <sup>8</sup> through his *feyle* <sup>9</sup> fantasy.  
 Trust right well that all this was sooth indeed;  
 Suppose that it no point be of the creed.

\* \* \* \* \*

<sup>1</sup> Threw suddenly.

<sup>2</sup> Seized.

<sup>3</sup> Bold.

<sup>4</sup> Split, were *ripen*.

<sup>5</sup> Looked. In the edit. 1685, it is *blenked*.

<sup>6</sup> Whole.

<sup>7</sup> "Upon the house, and all the rest on fire." Edit. 1685.

<sup>8</sup> Lost.

<sup>9</sup> Probably the same as *fey*, fatal. (Rudd. Gl.)



By *sic* mischiëf *giff* his men might be lost,  
 Drownyt, or slain *amang* the *Inglis* <sup>1</sup> host,  
 Or what it was in likeness of Fawdoun,  
 Which brought his men to sudden confusioun,—

\* \* \* \*

I cannot speak of *sic* divinity, &c.

(Book v. ver. 175, &c.)

The following incident is of a less terrific nature. Wallace had a mistress at Perth, whom he visited in the disguise of a priest ; but he was accidentally discovered, and his mistress seized, and prevailed on by threats and promises to betray her gallant admirer. When every preparation has been made to surprise him—

————— he *entryt* <sup>2</sup> in the town  
*Wittand* no thing of all this false treasoun,  
*Till* her chamber he went *but mair abaid* <sup>3</sup>.  
 She welcom'd him, and full great pleasance made.  
 What that they wrought I cannot *graithly* <sup>4</sup> say ;  
 Right *unperfyt* I am of Venus' play :  
 But hastily he *graithit* <sup>5</sup> him to gang.  
*Than* she him took, and *speir'd giff he thought lang* <sup>6</sup> ?  
 She askyt him that night with her to bide :  
 Soon he said, " Nay ! for chance that may betide !  
 My men are left all at mis-rule for me ;  
 I may not sleep this night *while* I them see !"

<sup>1</sup> English.

<sup>2</sup> Entered.

<sup>3</sup> Without more *abode*, i. e. delay.

<sup>4</sup> Readily.

<sup>5</sup> Made ready, prepared.

<sup>6</sup> Asked if he thought the time long, i. e. if he was tired.

*Than* weepy she, and said full oft, "Alas!  
 That I was made! *wa* worth the cursyt cause!  
 Now have I lost the best man *livand* is:  
 O feeble mind, to do *sa* foul amiss!  
 O *waryit*<sup>1</sup> wit, wicked, and *wariance*,  
 That me has brought into this *myscheful* chance!  
 Alas," she said, "in world that I was wrought!  
*Gyff* all this<sup>2</sup> pain on myself might be brought!  
 I have '*servit to be brynt in a gleid*<sup>3</sup>.'

When Wallace saw her *ner of witt couth weid*<sup>4</sup>,  
 In his armis he caught her soberly,  
 And said, "Dear heart, *wha* has mis-done aught? I?"  
 "Nay, I," quoth she, "has falsely wrought this train,  
 I have you sold! right now ye will be slain!"  
 She told him of her treason *till* an end  
 As I have said; what needis *mair* legend?  
*At*<sup>5</sup> her he *speir'd* giff she *forthought*<sup>6</sup> it *sare*:  
*Wu!* yea," she said, "and shall do evermare!  
 My *waryed werd*<sup>7</sup> in world I *mon*<sup>8</sup> fulfill:  
 To mend this 'miss I would burn on a hill!"

He comfort her, and bade her have no *dreid*;  
 "I will," he said, "have some part of thy *weid*<sup>9</sup>."

<sup>1</sup> Cursed. (*Werian. Sax.*)<sup>2</sup> So MS.—Ed. 1790, his.<sup>3</sup> Deserved to be burnt in a coal fire.<sup>4</sup> She could not imagine any contrivance?<sup>5</sup> *Of* her he asked, &c.<sup>6</sup> Repented.<sup>7</sup> Destiny.<sup>8</sup> Must.<sup>9</sup> Dress.

Her gown he took on him, and *courches*<sup>1</sup> als :  
 " Will God I shall escape this treason false,  
 I thee forgive !" withoutyn wordis *mair*,  
 His kissyt her, *syne* took his leave to fare.  
 His *burly*<sup>2</sup> brand that help'd him oft in need,  
 Right privily he hid it under that *weid*<sup>3</sup>.  
 To the south gate the *gaynest*<sup>4</sup> way he drew,  
 Where that he found of armyt men *enew*<sup>5</sup>.  
 To them he told, dissemblyt countenance,  
 " To the chamber, where he was upon chance,  
 Speed fast !" he said, " Wallace is lockyt in !"  
*Fra* him they sought withoutyn noise or din,  
 To that same house ; about they can them cast.  
 Out at the gate *than* Wallace gat full fast,  
 Right glad in heart when that he was without,  
 Right fast he *yeide*<sup>6</sup>, a *stour* pace, and a stout.  
*Twa* him beheld, and said, " We will go see !  
 A *stalwart*<sup>7</sup> quean, forsooth, yon seems to be."  
 Him they followit, &c.

(Book iv. ver. 731, &c.)

The abruptness of this author's manner has very often a dramatic effect, and gives considerable life and spirit to his narrative, which, on account of his blindness, he was unable to diversify with those beautiful pieces of pic-

<sup>1</sup> Kerchief, from *couvre chef*. Fr. ; that which covers the head.

<sup>2</sup> Shakspeare uses the word for *huge* ; but it seems to be derived from the Old French word *bouira*, (*bourrer*, *frapper*,) to strike. La Combe.

<sup>3</sup> Clothing.

<sup>4</sup> Readiest.

<sup>5</sup> Enough.

<sup>6</sup> Went.

<sup>7</sup> Bold.

turesque description in which the Scottish poets in general have so particularly excelled. The relation of Wallace's fishing adventure in the first book ; that of his engagement with the "red reiffar" (*rover*), in the ninth ; and several smaller incidents, dispersed through the work, are sketched with singular ability, and prove that Henry was a great master of his art, and that he deserved the popularity which he acquired among his countrymen, and which he continues to retain, after the lapse of more than three centuries.

Of the almost numberless editions of this work, the most elegant, and apparently the most correct, is that of Perth, 1790, in three small volumes, which professes to be exactly copied from the MS. in the Advocates' library at Edinburgh.

The only poets who occur in the reign of Edward IV. are, JOHN HARDING, whose *chronicle* is beneath criticism in point of composition, and can only be an object of curiosity to the antiquary : JOHN SCOGAN, whose pretended *jests* were published by Andrew Borde, a mad physician in the court of Henry VIII., and JOHN NORTON and GEORGE RIPLEY, whose *didactic poems* on the subject of *alchemy* are preserved, together with much other trash, in the strange farrago edited by Ashmole, under the title of "Theatrum Chemicum."

But the greatest literary curiosity of this reign is the work of the Lady JULIANA, sister to Richard Lord BERNERS, and prioress of the nunnery of Sopewell, which was written in 1481, and published soon after at the neighbouring monastery at St. Alban's. It contains treatises on hawking, hunting, and heraldry : in all of which the good lady seems to have rivalled the most eminent professors of those arts. A second edition, which was printed at London by Wynkyn de Worde, in 1496, contains an additional treatise on the art of angling ; as also a sort of lyrical epilogue to the book of hunting, which is

not entirely devoid of merit. In the third edition (printed partly by Robert Toy, and partly for him by William Copland), the treatise on heraldry is wanting; but the epilogue is preserved. It is as follows :—

*To have a faithful friend*<sup>1</sup>.

A faithful friend would I fain find,  
 To find him there he might be found;  
 But now is the world wext so unkind,  
 That friendship is fall to the ground.  
 Now, a friend I have found,  
 That I will neither *ban*<sup>2</sup> ne curse;  
 But, of all friends in field or town,  
 Ever gramercy mine own purse.

My purse it is my privy wife :  
 (This song I dare both sing and say :)  
 It parteth men of muche strife,  
 When every man for himself shall pay.  
 As I ride in rich array  
 For gold and silver men will me *flourish*<sup>3</sup> :  
 By this matter I dare well say  
 Ever gramercy mine own purse.

As I ride with gold so *rede*,  
 And have to do with landys law,

<sup>1</sup> This title is from Toy's ed.—W. de Worde's, from which the text is given, has none.

<sup>2</sup> Execrate.

<sup>3</sup> Probably *flatter*; but the rhyme is indefensible.

Men for my money will make me speed,  
 And for my goods they will me *knawe* :  
 More and less to me will draw,  
 Both the better and the worse :  
 By this matter I say *in sawe* <sup>1</sup>  
 Ever gramercy mine own purse.

It fell by me upon a time,  
 As it hath *doo* by many one *me*,  
 My horse, my neat, my sheep, my swine,  
 And all my goods they fell me fro :  
 I went to my friends and told them so ;  
 And home again they bade me truss :  
 I said again, when I was wo,  
 Ever gramercy mine own purse.

Therefore I *rede* you, sires all,  
 To assay your friends *or* ye have need :  
 For, *and* ye come down and have a fall,  
 Full few of them for you will *grede* <sup>2</sup>.  
 Therefore, assay them every one,  
 Both the better and the worse.—  
 Our Lord, that shope both sun and moon,  
 Send us spending in our purse !

The treatise on hunting, though written in rhyme, has no resemblance to poetry : the other parts of the work are professedly written in prose.

Mr. Warton notices, as contemporary with dame

<sup>1</sup> Proverbially.

<sup>2</sup> Cry, lament.

Juliana, WILLIAM OF NASSYNGTON, a proctor in the ecclesiastical court of York, who translated, in 1480, into English verse, a *Latin essay on the Trinity*, written by John of Waldenby, an Augustine friar of Yorkshire. About the same time was published an anonymous work, called THE CALENDAR OF SHEPHERDS, translated from the "*Calendrier des Bergers*." It is a sort of perpetual almanack, consisting of mingled prose and verse, and containing, like many of our modern almanacks, a vast variety of heterogeneous matter.

A *ballad* written by ANTHONY WIDVILLE or WOODVYLLE, EARL OF RIVERS, during his confinement in Pontefract Castle (vide Percy's *Reliques*, vol. ii. p. 44, last edit. of Ritson's *Ancient Songs*, p. 87), completes the catalogue of English poetry for this period.

Among the minor poets of Scotland, at this time, the most conspicuous, perhaps, is ROBERT HENRYSOUN, of whose life, however, no anecdotes are preserved, except that, according to Sir Francis Kinaston, his Latin translator, he was a schoolmaster at Dunfermling. His *Testament* and *Complaint of Cresseide* are to be found in Urry's edition of Chaucer, and several of his poems are inserted in Lord Hailes's extracts from the Bannatyne MS. Among the best of these is the popular ballad of *Robene and Makyne*; but the most singular is the following, which is called

*The Garment of good Ladies.*

Would my good lady love me best,  
And work after my will,  
I should a garment goodliest  
Gar make her body till<sup>1</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> Cause to be made to her shape.

Of high honoûr should be her hood,  
 Upon her head to wear,  
 Garnish'd with governance, so good  
*Na deeming should her deir* <sup>1</sup>.

Her *sark* <sup>2</sup> should be her body next,  
 Of chastity so white ;  
 With shame and dread together mixt,  
 The same should be *perfyt* <sup>3</sup>.

Her kirtle should be of clean constànce,  
 Lait with *lesum* <sup>4</sup> love ;  
 The *mailyeis* <sup>5</sup> of continuance,  
 For never to remove.

Her gown should be of goodliness,  
 Well ribbon'd with renown ;  
*Purfill'd* <sup>6</sup> with pleasure in *ilk* <sup>7</sup> place,  
 Furrit with fine fashioun.

Her belt should be of benignity,  
 About her middle meet ;  
 Her mantle of humility,  
 To *tholl* <sup>8</sup> both wind and *weit* <sup>9</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> No opinions should dismay her; i. e. she should have no cause to fear censure.

<sup>2</sup> Shift.

<sup>3</sup> Perfect.

<sup>4</sup> Loyal.

<sup>5</sup> Net-work. Fr.; here it means the eyelet-holes for lacing her kirtle.

<sup>6</sup> Parfilé, Fr. fringed, or bordered.

<sup>7</sup> Each.

<sup>8</sup> Suffer.

<sup>9</sup> Wet.



Her hat should be of fair havìng,  
 And her tippet of truth ;  
 Her *patelet* of good *pansìng* <sup>1</sup>,  
 Her *hals-ribbon* of *ruth* <sup>2</sup>.

Her sleeves should be of esperance,  
 To keep her *fra* despair :  
 Her glovis of <sup>3</sup> good governance,  
 To hide her fingers fair.

Her shoen should be of *sickernes* <sup>4</sup>,  
 In sign that she not slide ;  
 Her hose of honesty, I guess,  
 I should for her provide.

Would she put on this garment gay,  
 I durst swear by my *seill* <sup>5</sup>,  
 That she wore never green nor gray  
 That *set* <sup>6</sup> her half so *weill* <sup>7</sup>.

Lord Hailes, in his notes on this poem, which he supposes to be "a sort of paraphrase of 1 Tim. ii. 9—11," observes very justly, that the comparison between female ornaments and female virtues is carried so far as to become "somewhat ridiculous." But this strange conver-

<sup>1</sup> Thinking. I do not understand the word *patelet* (*patellette*. Fr.) unless it mean *lappet*.

<sup>2</sup> Her neck-ribbon of pity.

<sup>3</sup> So the MS.—Lord Hailes inserts *the* inaccurately.

<sup>4</sup> Security, steadiness.

<sup>5</sup> Felicity.

<sup>6</sup> Became.

<sup>7</sup> Well.

sion of the virtues into the stock in trade of an allegorical mantua-maker was first conceived by *Olivier de la Marche*, who, in a poem intitled "*Le parement et triomphe des dames d'honneur*," recommends to the ladies *slippers of humility, shoes of diligence, stockings of perseverance, garters of "ferme propos,"* (i. e. determination,) *a petticoat of chastity, a pin-cushion of patience, &c.*

Such was the taste of the age: but the following fine moral poem, the next in the same collection, will show that Henrysoun's talents were fitted for a better employment than that of imitating *Olivier de la Marche*.

### *The Abbey Walk* <sup>1</sup>.

#### I.

Alone as I went up and down  
 In an abbey was fair to see,  
*Thinkand* what consolation  
 Was best *into* adversity;  
*On case* <sup>2</sup> I cast on side mine *ee* <sup>3</sup>,  
 And saw this written upon <sup>4</sup> a wall:  
 "Of what estate, man, that thou be,  
 Obey, and thank thy God *of* <sup>5</sup> all!"

<sup>1</sup> Lord Hailes gave this title to the succeeding poem from one mentioned in "the Complaynt of Scotland." He adds, "If the study of Scottish history should ever revive, a new edition of Inglish's Complaint would be an acceptable present to the public." For this acceptable present we are indebted to the ingenious Mr. Leyden of Edinburgh, who has lately reprinted the very curious work in question with the most scrupulous fidelity, and added a preliminary dissertation and glossary, abounding with antiquarian learning.

<sup>2</sup> By chance.

<sup>3</sup> Eye.

<sup>4</sup> So MS. not *on*.

<sup>5</sup> For.

## II.

Thy kingdom, and thy great empire,  
 Thy royalty, nor rich array,  
 Shall nought endure at thy desire,  
 But, as the wind, will wend away.  
 Thy gold, and all thy goodis gay,  
 When fortune list, will *fra* thee fall :  
*Sen* thou *sic*<sup>1</sup> samples sees *ilk* day,  
 Obey, and thank thy God of all !

## IV.

Though thou be blind, or have an halt,  
 Or in thy face deformit ill,  
*Sa* it come not through thy default,  
*Na* man should thee *repreif*<sup>2</sup> by skill.  
 Blame not thy Lord, *sa* is his will !  
 Spurn not thy foot against the wall ;  
 But with meek heart, and prayer still,  
 Obey, and thank thy God of all.

## V.

God, of his justice, *mon*<sup>3</sup> correct ;  
 And, of his mercy, pity have ;  
 He is *ane* judge, to *nane* suspect,  
 To punish sinful man and save.  
 Though thou be lord *attour the laif*<sup>4</sup>,  
 And afterward made bound and thrall,

<sup>1</sup> Such.<sup>2</sup> Reprove.<sup>3</sup> Must.<sup>4</sup> Above the rest : *literally, beside* the rest. Fr.

*Ane* poor beggar, with scrip and *staiff*<sup>1</sup>  
Obey, and thank thy God of all.

## VI.

This changing, and great variance  
Of earthly statis, up and down,  
Is not *but*<sup>2</sup> casualty and chance,  
(As some men sayis without *ressoun*)<sup>3</sup>  
But by the great provisioun  
Of God above, that rule thee shall !  
Therefore, ever thou make thee *boun*<sup>4</sup>  
To obey, and thank thy God of all.

## VII.

In wealth be meek, *heich*<sup>5</sup> not thyself ;  
Be glad in wilful poverty ;  
Thy power, and thy worldis pelf,  
Is nought but very vanity.  
Remember, *him*<sup>6</sup> that died *on tre*<sup>7</sup>  
For thy sake tastit the bitter gall :  
*Wha heis*<sup>8</sup> low hearts, and *laweis he*<sup>9</sup>,  
Obey ; and thank thy God of all !

(P. 105.)

PATRICK JOHNSTOUN is only known to us by a single specimen of sixty-four lines, printed in Lord Hailes's collection. The following are the most striking stanzas.

<sup>1</sup> Staff.<sup>2</sup> Only.<sup>3</sup> Reason.<sup>4</sup> Ready.<sup>5</sup> Exalt.<sup>6</sup> He.<sup>7</sup> On the cross.<sup>8</sup> Exalts.<sup>9</sup> Lowers high.

*The three dead Powis*<sup>1</sup>.

## I.

O sinful man ! *into* this mortal *se*<sup>2</sup>,  
 Which is the vale of mourning and of care,  
 With *gaistly*<sup>3</sup> sight behold our headis three,  
 Our *holkit* eyn, our *peilit powis bare*<sup>4</sup> !  
 As ye are now, *into*<sup>5</sup> this world we were ;  
*Als* fresh, *als* fair, *als* lusty to behold,  
 When thou lookis on this sooth exemplair,  
 Of thyself, man, thou may be right un-bold.

## III.

O wanton youth ! *als* fresh as lusty May,  
 Fairest of<sup>6</sup> flowers renewit white and *reid*,  
 Behold our heads, O lusty gallants gay !  
 Full earthly<sup>7</sup> thus shall lie thy lusty *heid*,  
*Holkit, and how, and wallowit as the weed*<sup>8</sup>.  
 Thy *crumplind*<sup>9</sup> hair and eke thy chrystal eyn  
 Full carefully conclude shall *duleful deid*<sup>10</sup> ;  
 Thy example here by us it may be seen.

<sup>1</sup> Polls, skulls.<sup>2</sup> Seat, residence.<sup>3</sup> Ghastly, or mental sight ?<sup>4</sup> Bald, bare skulls.<sup>5</sup> In.<sup>6</sup> With.<sup>7</sup> So the MS.—Lord Hailes prints, inaccurately, *loathly*.<sup>8</sup> *Holkit* and *how* are nearly synonymous, both meaning *hollow*, emaciated: *wallowit* is *faded*.<sup>9</sup> Curled, like tendrils. Lord Hailes prints *crampland*, inaccurately.<sup>10</sup> Mournful death shall put an end to, &c.

## IV.

O ladies, white in *claithis* <sup>1</sup> *córuscant* <sup>2</sup>  
 Polish'd with pearl and many precious *stane*,  
 With *palpis* white, and *hals(es)* <sup>3</sup> elegant,  
 Circlit with gold and sapphires many *ane* ;  
 Your fingeris small, white as *whalis bane* <sup>4</sup>,  
 Array'd with rings and many rubies *reid* ;  
 As we lie thus, so shall ye lie *ilk ane*  
 With *peelit powis*, and *holkit* thus your *heid* !

## VI.

This question who can absolve, let see,  
 What *phisnamour* <sup>5</sup> or *perfynt* palmister,  
*Wha* was fairest or foulest of us three ?  
 Or which of us of kin was gentiller ?  
 Or *maist* excellent in science or in *lare*,  
 In art music, or in astronomy ?  
 Here shoulde be your study and repair,  
 And think as thus all your headis *mon* be !  
 (Page 139.)

• • • • •

Another Scottish poet of this period is MERSAR, whose Christian name is not known ; and of whose talents the

<sup>1</sup> Clothes.

<sup>2</sup> Dazzling.

<sup>3</sup> Necks.

<sup>4</sup> This does not mean what we call *whalebone*, nor indeed any *bone*, but the *tooth* or *horn* of the *narwal*, or unicorn-fish, which was employed for many of the purposes of ivory.

<sup>5</sup> Physiognomist.

following small poem, extracted from Lord Hailes's collection, affords the only specimen :

*Peril in Paramours.*

I.

Alas ! so *sober*<sup>1</sup> is the might  
 Of women for to make debate  
*In contrair* mennis subtle slight,  
 Which are fulfillit with *dissait*<sup>2</sup> ;  
 With treason so intoxicate  
 Are mennis mouthis at all hours,  
 Whom in to trust no woman *wait*<sup>3</sup> ,  
*Sic* peril lies in paramours !

II.

Some swearis that he loves so *weill*  
 That he will die without *remeid*,  
 But *gife* that he her friendship feel  
 That *garris*<sup>4</sup> him *sic* languor lead :  
 And though he have no doubt of speed,  
 Yet will he sigh and show great showers,  
 As he would *sterfe into that steid*<sup>5</sup> !  
*Sic* peril lies in paramours !

III.

*Athis*<sup>6</sup> to swear, and gifts to *hecht*<sup>7</sup>,  
 (More than he has thirty fold !)

<sup>1</sup> Small, weak.

<sup>2</sup> Deceit.

<sup>3</sup> Knows.

<sup>4</sup> Causes.

<sup>5</sup> Die in that place.

<sup>6</sup> Oaths.

<sup>7</sup> Promise

And for her honour for to *fecht*,  
*While* that his blood becomis cold !  
 But, *fra* she to his *willis yold*,  
 Adieu, farewell *thir* summer flowers !  
*All grows in glass that seemit gold*<sup>1</sup> :  
*Sic* peril lies in paramours !

## IV.

*Than* turnis he his sail anon,  
 And passes to another port ;  
 Though she be never so wo-begone,  
 Her caris cold are his comfort.  
 Herefore I pray in termys short,  
 Christ keep these *birdis bright in bowers*<sup>2</sup>  
*Fra* false lovers, and their resort !  
*Sic* peril lies in paramours !

(P. 156.)

<sup>1</sup> The substitution of glass for silver or golden drinking vessels suggested this proverbial phrase, which is not uncommon amongst our early poets.

<sup>2</sup> It has been already observed that the expression *birds* (i. e. *brides*) *bright in bowers* was a poetical circumlocution for *women*.



## CHAPTER XV.

*Reign of Henry VII. (1485—1509).*

WILLIAM DUNBAR.—GAWIN DOUGLAS.—MINOR POETS OF  
THE REIGN.—STEPHEN HAWES.

WILLIAM DUNBAR, the greatest poet that Scotland has produced, was born about the year 1465, at Salton, in East Lothian, and became a travelling novice of the Franciscan order, in which character he visited several parts of England and France; but, disliking this mode of life, he returned to Scotland, where he died in old age about 1530. "In his younger years," says Mr. Pinkerton, "he seems to have had great expectations that his merit would have recommended him to an ecclesiastical benefice, and frequently in his small poems addresses the king to that purpose, but apparently without success. I have in vain looked over many calendars of charters, &c. of his period, to find Dunbar's name; but suspect that it was never written by a lawyer."

Mr. Warton, who has bestowed great commendations on Dunbar, observes that his genius is peculiarly "of a moral and didactic cast;" and it is certainly in such pieces that he is most confessedly superior to all who preceded, and to nearly all who have followed him; but his satires, his allegorical and descriptive poetry, and his tales, are all admirable, and full of fancy and originality.

The following specimen, which was apparently written in his youth, since it is stated to have been composed at Oxford, during his travels in England, is strongly marked

by that turn of mind which is attributed to him by Mr. Warton.

*Lair is vain without Governance* <sup>1</sup>.

To speak of science, craft, or sapience,  
 Of virtue, moral *cunning* <sup>2</sup>, or doctrine ;  
 Of truth, of wisdom, or intelligence ;  
 Of every study, *lair*, or discipline ;  
 All is but *tynt* <sup>3</sup>, or ready for to *tyne* <sup>4</sup>,  
 Not using it as it should usit be,  
 The craft *exercing* <sup>5</sup>, *achieving* <sup>6</sup> not the fine :  
 A perilous sickness is vain prosperity !

The curious probation logical ;  
 The eloquence of ornate rhetoric ;  
 The natural science philosophical ;  
 The dark appearance of astronomy ;  
 The theologue's sermon ; the fable of poetry ;  
 Without good life all in the *salf does dé* <sup>7</sup>,  
 As Mayis flowers does in September dry :  
 A perilous life is vain prosperity !

Wherefore, ye clerkis, greatest of constànce,  
 Fullest of science and of knowledging,

<sup>1</sup> Learning is vain without good conduct.

<sup>2</sup> Knowledge.

<sup>3</sup> Lost.

<sup>4</sup> Lose.

<sup>5</sup> Exercising.

<sup>6</sup> So I venture to print it. Mr. P. gives *eschewing*.

<sup>7</sup> I do not understand the word *salf*; perhaps it is *self*. Ruddiman observes, that G. Douglas, and other authors of that time, constantly wrote *the self* for *itself*.

To us be mirrors in your governance!  
 And in our darkness be lamps of seeing!  
 Or *than* in vain is all your long *lering*<sup>1</sup>;  
*Gyf* to your saws your deedis *contrair* be,  
 Your *maist*<sup>2</sup> accuser is your own cunning:  
 A perilous sickness is vain prosperity.  
 (Pinkerton's Anc. Scot. Poems, p. 106.)

The following is still more beautiful:

*Meditation written in Winter.*

I.

*Into thir*<sup>3</sup> dark and *drublie*<sup>4</sup> days,  
 When sable all the heaven arrays,  
 When misty vapours clouds the skies,  
 Nature all courage me denies  
 Of song, balladis, and of plays.

II.

When that the night does lengthen hours,  
 With wind, with hail, and heavy showers,  
 My *dule spreit*<sup>5</sup> does lurk *for schoir*<sup>6</sup>;  
 My heart for languor *does*<sup>7</sup> *forloir*<sup>8</sup>,  
 For lack of Summer with his flowers.

<sup>1</sup> Learning.

<sup>2</sup> Most, greatest.

<sup>3</sup> In these.

<sup>4</sup> Troubled. (Pinkerton's Glossary.)

<sup>5</sup> Mournful spirit.

<sup>6</sup> Terror? (Pink. Gloss.); perhaps it may mean *for sure*, i. e. *certainly*.

<sup>7</sup> Ought it not to be *is*?

<sup>8</sup> Forlorn.

## III.

I wake, I turn ; sleep may I nought ;  
 I vexed am with heavy thought ;  
     This world all o'er I cast about :  
     And aye the *mair* I am in doubt,  
 The *mair* that I *remeid* have sought.

## IV.

I am assay'd on every side.  
 Despair says aye, " In time provide,  
     And get something whereon to *leif*<sup>1</sup> ;  
     Or, with great trouble and mischièf,  
 Thou shall *into* this court abide."

## V.

*Than* Patience says, " Be *na* aghast ;  
 " Hold hope and truth within thee fast ;  
     And let Fortùne work forth her rage ;  
     When that no reason may assuage,  
*While* that her glass be run and past."

## VI.

And Prudence in my ear says aye,  
 " Why would you hold what will away ?  
     Or crave what you may have no space  
     [To brook, as] to another place  
 A journey going every day ?

<sup>1</sup> Live.

## VII.

And then says Age, " My friend come near,  
 And be not strange I thee *requeir* ;  
 Come brother, by the hand me take !  
 Remember, thou has 'compt to make  
 Of all the time thou spendit here !"

## VIII.

*Syne*, *Deid* <sup>1</sup> casts up his gatis wide,  
 Saying, "*Thir* <sup>2</sup> open shall the 'bide :  
 Albeit that thou were ne'er so stout,  
 Under this lintel <sup>3</sup> shall thou *lout* <sup>4</sup> :  
 There is *nane* other way beside."

## IX.

For fear of this, all day I droop.  
 No gold in *kist* <sup>5</sup>, nor wine in *coop* <sup>6</sup>,  
 No lady's beauty, nor love's bliss,  
 May *lut* <sup>7</sup> me to remember this,  
 How glad *that ever* <sup>8</sup> I dine or sup.

## X.

Yet, when the night begins to short,  
 It does my *spreit some part* <sup>9</sup> comfort,

<sup>1</sup> Then Death.<sup>2</sup> These shall wait for you always open.<sup>3</sup> The beam over a door.<sup>4</sup> Bend, stoop, bow.<sup>5</sup> Chest.<sup>6</sup> In cup ? or barrel ?<sup>7</sup> Prevent.<sup>8</sup> Soever.<sup>9</sup> In some respects, in some degree.

Of thought oppressit with the showers.  
 Come, lusty Summer, with thy flowers,  
 That I may live in some disport !  
 (Pinkerton, p. 125.)

It is pleasant to observe in this fine poem the elastic spirit of Dunbar struggling against the pressure of melancholy : indeed it appears that his morality was of the most cheerful kind. We have seen the description of his own feelings, and the following stanzas contain his advice to others.

*No Treasure without Gladness.*

I.

Be merry, man ! and take not far in mind  
 The wavering of this wretchit world of sorow !  
 To God be humble, and to thy friend be kind,  
 And with thy neighbours gladly lend and borrow :  
 His chance to-night, it may be thine to-morrow.  
 Be blithe in heart for any áventure ;  
 For oft with *wysure* <sup>1</sup> it has been said *aforrow* <sup>2</sup>,  
 Without gladnèss availis no treasùre.

II.

Make thee good cheer of it that God thee sends,  
 For worldis *wrak* <sup>3</sup> but welfare, nought availis :  
 Na good is thine, save only but thou spends ;

<sup>1</sup> Wisdom.

<sup>2</sup> A-fore, before.

<sup>3</sup> Merchandise, treasure.

*Remenant all thou brookis but with bales* <sup>1</sup>.  
 Seek to solàce when sadness thee assails :  
 In dolour *lang* thy life may not endure ;  
 Wherefore of comfort set up all thy sails :  
 Without gladnèss availis no treasùre.

## III.

Follow on pity <sup>2</sup> ; flee trouble and debate ;  
 With famous folkis hold thy company ;  
 Be charitable, and humble in thine estate,  
 For worldly honour lastis *but a cry* <sup>3</sup> ;  
 For trouble in earth take no melancholy ;  
 Be rich in patience, *gif* thou in goods be poor ;  
 Who livis merry, he livis mightily :  
 Without gladnèss availis no treasùre.

## IV.

Thou sees *thir* wretches set with sorrow and care,  
 To gather goods in all their livis space ;  
 And, when their bags are full, their selves are bare,  
 And of their riches but the keeping has ;  
 While others come to spend it, that has grace,  
 Which of thy winning no labour had nor cure.  
 Take thou example, and spend with merriness :  
 Without gladnèss availis no treasùre.

<sup>1</sup> Thou canst enjoy all the remainder only with *bale*, or sorrow.

<sup>2</sup> Originally *pity* and *piety* are the same. (Rudd. Gloss.)

<sup>3</sup> No longer than a sound.

## V.

Though all the *werk* <sup>1</sup> that ever had *livand* wight

Were only thine, no more thy part does fall

But meat, drink, *clais* <sup>2</sup>, and of the *laif* <sup>3</sup> a sight !

Yet, to the judge thou shall give 'compt of all.

*Ane* reckoning right comes of *ane* ragment <sup>4</sup> small.

Be just, and joyous, and do to none injùre,

And truth shall make thee strong as any wall :

Without gladnèss availis no treasùre.

(Lord Hailes's Anc. Scot. Poems, p. 54.)

In these specimens we see much good sense and sound morality, expressed with force and conciseness. This indeed is Dunbar's peculiar excellence. His style, whether grave or humorous, whether simple or ornamented, is always energetic ; and though all his compositions cannot be expected to possess equal merit, we seldom find in them a weak or redundant stanza.

But his most admired and most truly poetical works are *the Thistle and the Rose*, and *the Golden Targe*.

The first of these was composed for the marriage of James IV. of Scotland, with Margaret, eldest daughter of our Henry VII., an event which is likely to have produced many invocations to the Muses, but which probably was hailed by very few panegyrics so delicate and ingenious as this of Dunbar. In the age of allegory and romance, when a knowledge of heraldry was a necessary accomplishment, it was natural enough to compliment the royal bridegroom, under the character of a *lion* (part of the arms of Scotland), or under that of the *thistle* ; and to describe the bride as the *rose*, proceeding from

<sup>1</sup> Possessions.

<sup>2</sup> Remainder.

<sup>3</sup> Clothes.

<sup>4</sup> Accompt.



the joint stems of York and Lancaster : but it required considerable ingenuity to call into action these heraldic personages. The poet has recourse to a dream, in which he supposes himself accosted by May, who desires him to celebrate in a poem the return of spring. She then introduces him into a delicious garden, to which all organized beings are summoned to appear before the goddess *Nature*, who crowns the lion, the eagle, and the thistle, as kings of beasts, birds, and plants, recommending at the same time to each many important moral and political maxims. To the protection of the thistle she particularly consigns the rose, whom she represents as "above the lily," (the house of Valois,) and whom she also invests with a crown, so brilliant as to *illumine all the land with its light* : at which joyful event, an universal song of gratulation from the birds interrupts the progress of the poet's vision.

In this singular but ingenious allegory Dunbar has interwoven a number of rich and glowing descriptions, much excellent advice, and many delicate compliments, without any fulsome adulation. "*The Golden Terge*" is, perhaps, still superior to the Thistle and Rose ; at least such seems to have been the opinion of Sir David Lindsay, who, in estimating the poetical genius of Dunbar, says, that he—

— " language had at large,  
As may be seen *intill his Golden Terge*."

(Compl. of the Papingo, ProL.)

This poem is a moral allegory, the object of which is to show the gradual and imperceptible influence of love, which even the golden target of reason cannot always repel. The poet walks out in a vernal morning, which he describes much at large, and in the most glowing language : the second stanza may be taken as a good specimen of his style.

Full angel-like *thir* birdis sang their *hours* <sup>1</sup>  
 Within their curtains green, within their bowers,  
 Apparell'd with white and red, with bloomys sweet.  
 Enamell'd was the field with all *colours* :  
 The pearlit drops shook as in silver showers,  
 While all in balm did branch and leavis *fleit* <sup>2</sup>.  
 Depart *fra* Phœbus did Aurora *greit* <sup>3</sup> :  
 Her chrystal tears I saw *hing* on the flowers,  
 Which he, for love, all drank up with his heat.  
 (Lord Hailes's Anc. Sc. P. p. 8.)

After some time—

What through the merry fowlis harmony,  
 And through the river's sound that ran me by,  
 On Flora's mantle I sleepit where I lay ;  
 Where soon, unto my dreamis fantasy,  
 I saw approach, *again* the orient sky,  
*Ane* sail as blossom [white] upon the spray,  
 With mast of gold, bright as the *sterne* <sup>4</sup> of day,  
 Which tended to the land full lustily  
 [With swiftest motion through a chrystal bay.]

And, hard on board, into the *blemit* <sup>5</sup> meads,  
*Amangis* the green *rispis* <sup>6</sup> and the reeds,  
 Arrivit she ; where-fro anon there lands  
 An hundred ladies, *lusty intill weeds* <sup>7</sup>,

<sup>1</sup> Matins, *heures*. Fr.

<sup>4</sup> Star.

<sup>7</sup> Pleasing in their attire.

<sup>2</sup> Float.

<sup>5</sup> Bloomed.

<sup>3</sup> Weep.

<sup>6</sup> Bulrushes.

*Als* fresh as flowers that in the May up-spreads,  
 In kirtles green, withoutin *kell*<sup>1</sup> or bands,  
 Their bright hair hang *glitterand* on the strand,  
 In tresses clear *wypit*<sup>2</sup> with golden *threids*,  
 With *pawpis*<sup>3</sup> white, and middles small as wands.  
 (P. 9.)

These are allegorical ladies, viz. Nature, Venus, Aurora, &c.

Full lustily *thir* ladies, all in *feir*<sup>4</sup>,  
 Enterit within this park of *maist plesier*,  
 Where that I lay *heilil*<sup>5</sup> with leavis rank :  
 The merry fowlis, blissfullest of cheer,  
*Salust*<sup>6</sup> Nature, methought, in their *maneir* ;  
 And every bloom on branch and eke on bank  
*Opnit*<sup>7</sup> and spread their balmy leavis dank,  
 Full low *inclinand* to their queen full clear,  
 Whom for their noble nourishing they thank.

The ladies are followed by a male group, consisting of Cupid and various other gods, who invite them to dance. The poet, quitting his ambush to view this spectacle, is discovered by Venus, who bids her *keen archers* arrest the intruder. Her attendants, dropping their green mantles, discover their bows, and advance against him. These assailants are *Youth*, *Beauty*, &c. whose darts are long ineffectual against the golden targe of *Reason*, till at length *Presence* (i. e. the habit of seeing the beloved

<sup>1</sup> Cawls, or caps, to confine their hair.

<sup>2</sup> Whipped or tied, or inwoven.

<sup>4</sup> Together.

<sup>6</sup> Saluted.

<sup>3</sup> Breasts.

<sup>5</sup> Covered.

<sup>7</sup> Opened.

object) throws a magical powder into the eyes of *Reason*, and the poet is overpowered by his allegorical adversaries, tempted by *Dissimulance*, terrified by *Danger*, and delivered over to *Heaviness*; after which Eolus blows a bugle; a storm arises, and the ladies take to their ship, which disappears, after a discharge of artillery so loud that the rainbow seemed to break, while the smoke rose to the firmament. This strangely terrible incident seems to have been introduced for the purpose of contrasting with the beautiful appearance of real nature, to which the poet is awaked.

Sweet was the vapours, and soft the morrowing,  
Wholesome the vale *depaynit* with flowers *ying*, &c.

The poem concludes with some laboured compliments to Chaucer, Gower, and Lydgate.

Of Dunbar's comic pieces, all of which possess considerable merit, the most excellent are his two tales of the *two married Women and the Widow*, and the *Friars of Berwick*. The latter, in particular, is admirable; but its merit would evidently be lost in an abridgment.

I believe that no edition of this elegant and original writer has yet been published.

GAWIN DOUGLAS, bishop of Dunkeld, was born in the end of 1474, or in the beginning of 1475. He was third son of Archibald, the great Earl of Angus; was educated at St. Andrews, is supposed to have spent some time in travelling, and on his return to Scotland became provost of St. Giles's church in Edinburgh. In 1514, the queen-mother (who afterwards married his nephew the earl of Angus) presented him to the abbey of Aberbrothick, and soon after to the archbishopric of St. Andrew's: but, the pope having refused to confirm his nomination, he never assumed the title. In the next year (1515) he became Bishop of Dunkeld; and, after some struggle, obtained peaceable possession of that see: but neither his ecclesi-

astical character, nor his learning, nor his many virtues, were able to preserve him, in those times of violence, from the proscription which involved the whole family of Douglas ; so that, towards the close of the year 1521, he was compelled, by the persecution of the Duke of Albany, to seek for protection in England, where he died about the month of April, 1522.

The only remaining works of this poet are, 1. *King Hart* ; 2. *The Palace of Honour* ; and 3. *A Translation of Virgil's Æneid*. Mr. Pinkerton has printed the first of these, from a MS. in the Maitland collection, in his *Ancient Scottish Poems* (2 vols. 1786), and the second, from the edition of 1533, in the first volume of his *Scottish Poems* (3 vols. 1792). Of the third there have been two editions, of which the best is that of Edinburgh, 1710, published by Mr. Ruddiman, with an excellent life of the author (by Bishop Sage), and a very curious and valuable glossary.

*King Hart* is an allegorical representation of human life. The heart, being the noblest part of man, is represented as his sovereign ; and the court of this imaginary monarch is composed of the several attributes of youth. *King Heart* is assaulted by *Queen Pleasance*, whom, after a long resistance, he marries. At length, *Age* arrives at their castle, and insists on being admitted : *Age* is immediately followed by *Conscience* ; queen *Pleasance* takes her departure ; *Decrepitude* attacks and wounds the king, who dies, after making his testament.

*The Palace of Honour* is also an allegory ; the general object of which is to represent the vanity and instability of worldly glory, and to show that virtue is the truest guide to happiness. The plan of this work was, perhaps, suggested by the *Sejour d'Honneur* of Octavien de St. Gelais : but as the merit of such works is now thought to consist only in the accidental beauties which they may be found to possess, their contrivance and fabric

is scarcely worth analyzing. St. Gelais, who was a great translator, made a French version of the *Æneid*, which, though miserably executed, may possibly have recommended him to this author's notice.

Gawin Douglas began his translation of the *Æneid* in January, 1512, and finished it, together with the supplement written by Mapheus Vegius, in July, 1513. The completion of such a poem in eighteen months, at a time when no metrical version of a classic (excepting Boethius) had yet appeared in English, is really astonishing : for the work is executed with equal fidelity and spirit, and is farther recommended by many beautiful specimens of original poetry, which, under the name of prologues, are prefixed to each of the thirteen books, and from which the following specimens of the author's style are selected.

The prologue to the seventh book is a description of winter, consisting of one hundred and sixty-five lines, but the reader will probably be satisfied with a very short sketch of this dismal picture.

The time and season bitter, cold, and pale,  
 They short dayis that *clerkis* <sup>1</sup> *clepe* <sup>2</sup> *brumale* :  
 When *brym* blastis of the northern *art* <sup>3</sup>  
 O'erwhelmyt had Neptunus in his cart,  
 And all to-shake the leavys off the trees,  
 The *rageand* storms *o'er-welterand* <sup>4</sup> *wally* <sup>5</sup> seas.  
 Rivers ran red on *spate* <sup>6</sup>, with water brown,  
 And *burnis* <sup>7</sup> *harlis* <sup>8</sup> all their bankis down ;

<sup>1</sup> Learned men.

<sup>4</sup> Rolling over.

<sup>7</sup> Rivulets.

<sup>2</sup> Call.

<sup>5</sup> Wavy.

<sup>8</sup> Drags.

<sup>3</sup> Arcturus.

<sup>6</sup> Foam.

And *land-birst*<sup>1</sup> *rumbland* rudely, with *sic bere*<sup>2</sup>,  
*Sa* loud ne'er *rummyst*<sup>3</sup> wild lyoùn nor bear.  
 Floods monsters, *sic* as *mere swinis*<sup>4</sup>, and whales,  
 For the tempèst, low in the deep *devales*<sup>5</sup>.

• • • • •

The soil *y sowpit*, into the water *wak*<sup>6</sup>,  
 The firmament o'ercast with cloudis black :  
 The ground fadit, and *fauch*<sup>7</sup> *wox* all the fields,  
 Mountain-tops sleekit with snow *over-hields*<sup>8</sup>.  
 On raggit rockis, of hard harsh *whyn-stane*,  
 With frozen fronts, cold *clynty*<sup>9</sup> *clewis*<sup>10</sup> *shane*.  
 Beauty was lost ; and barren shew the lands,  
 With frostis *hare*<sup>11</sup> *o'erfret*<sup>12</sup> the fieldis stands.  
 [*Sere birtir bubbis*<sup>13</sup>, and the shoutis *snell*<sup>14</sup>,  
 Seem'd on the sward in similitude of hell ;  
 Reducing to our mind, in every stead,  
*Gousty*<sup>15</sup> shadows of *cild* and grisly dead :]  
 Thick *drumly*<sup>16</sup> *skuggis*<sup>17</sup> darken'd so the heaven !  
 Dim skyis oft forth *warpit*<sup>18</sup> fearful *levin*<sup>19</sup>, &c.

In this description, and throughout the whole prologue,

<sup>1</sup> Landsprings, accidental torrents.

<sup>2</sup> Noise.

<sup>3</sup> Roared.

<sup>4</sup> Sea-hogs, i. e. porpoises.

<sup>5</sup> Descend. Fr.

<sup>6</sup> Moist with water.

<sup>7</sup> *Fauve*, Fr. fawn-coloured.

<sup>8</sup> Covered.

<sup>9</sup> Hard, flinty.

<sup>10</sup> Cliffs.

<sup>11</sup> Hoar.

<sup>12</sup> Embroidered.

<sup>13</sup> Many huge blasts.

<sup>14</sup> Piercing.

<sup>15</sup> Ghastly.

<sup>16</sup> Muddy, opaque.

<sup>17</sup> Shadows.

<sup>18</sup> Threw.

<sup>19</sup> Lightning.

the prospect seems to be designedly crowded and even encumbered with dreadful images : but it must be confessed that the English reader finds himself still further bewildered by a number of uncouth words, some of which are scarcely rendered intelligible by Ruddiman's excellent glossary.

It has been observed that, during the fourteenth century, the difference between the Scottish and English dialects was scarcely perceptible ; and that those persons who are familiarized with the phraseology of Chaucer will find no difficulty in understanding that of Barbour and Wyntown : whereas the diction of Gawin Douglas is far more obscure, and even in appearance more antiquated and obsolete, by near a century, than that of writers who preceded him. The fact is notorious ; and its causes may be worth tracing.

The Danish and Anglo-Saxon, the supposed parents of the Scottish and English languages, were distinct dialects of the elder Gothic : but, in the infancy of literature, the poets of both countries, being equally dissatisfied with the poverty of their respective jargons, and conscious of the superior elegance which appeared in the French minstrel compositions, vied with each other in borrowing from these favourite models as many words and phrases as it was possible to incorporate with their native forms of speech. In consequence of this practice, the two languages seem to have attained, about the middle of the fourteenth century, their greatest degree of similarity. But these foreign words, being once naturalized, could not fail of undergoing considerable alterations ; because the broader vowel-sounds, the gutturals, and the strongly aspirated accents of the Scots differed equally from the French and English pronunciation ; and this difference was preserved and increased, on both sides, by discordant and capricious systems of orthography. At the same time, as the number of readers increased, the writers



became desirous of accommodating themselves to the general taste ; and consequently began to transplant from colloquial into literary language a variety of popular expressions, which, being peculiar to the one country, were obscure, or even unintelligible, to the natives of the other.

Gawin Douglas, indeed, was so far from seeking popularity from English readers, that, in his excuses for his defects of style, he only laments the impossibility of making it purely and exclusively Scottish.

And yet, forsooth, I set my busy pain  
 (As that I *couth*) to make it BRADE <sup>1</sup> AND PLAIN :  
*Keepand* NO SODROUN <sup>2</sup>, but OUR OWN LANGUAGE,  
 And speak as I learn'd when I was *ane* page.  
*Na* yet so clean all *sodroun* I refuse,  
 But SOME WORD I PRONOUNCE as neighbours does.  
 Like as in Latin bene *Grewe* <sup>3</sup> termes some,  
 So me behovit, whilom (or be dumb),  
 Some bastard Latin, French, or *Ynglis* <sup>4</sup> *ois* <sup>5</sup>,  
 Where scant was Scottis : I had *nane* other choice.  
 (Preface.)

The most beautiful of all Gawin Douglas's prologues is that of the twelfth book : it is hoped therefore, that the reader will pardon the length of the following extract, in favour of the splendid imagery which it exhibits. It is a description of May.

As fresh Aurora, to mighty Tithone spouse,  
*Ischit* <sup>6</sup> of her saffron bed, and *evyr* <sup>7</sup> house,

<sup>1</sup> Broad.

<sup>4</sup> English.

<sup>2</sup> Southern, English.

<sup>5</sup> Use.

<sup>3</sup> Greek.

<sup>6</sup> Issueth.

<sup>7</sup> Ivory.

In *crammesy*<sup>1</sup> clad, and grainit violet,  
 With sanguine cape, the selvage purpurate,  
 Unshut the windows of her large hall  
 Spread all with roses, and full of balm royall :  
 And eke the heavenly portis chrystalline  
*Upwarpis*<sup>2</sup> *brade* the world *till* illumene.

\* \* \* \*

Eous, the steed, with ruby *hammys*<sup>3</sup> red,  
 Above the seais lifts forth his head,  
 Of colour *sore*<sup>4</sup>, and some-deal brown as berry,  
 For to alighten and glad our hemispery,  
 The flame out *brastin* at the *neiss-thirlis*<sup>5</sup>.

\* \* \* \*

While shortly, with the *blesand*<sup>6</sup> torch of day,  
*Abulyeit*<sup>7</sup> in his *lemand*<sup>8</sup> fresh array  
 Forth of his palace royal *ischit* Phebus,  
 With golden crown, and visage glorious ;  
 Crisp hairis, bright as chrysolite, or topàse,  
 For *whais* hue might *nane* behold his face ;  
 The fiery sparkis *brasting* from his een,  
 To purge the air, and gild the tender green.

\* \* \* \*

The aureate fanis of his throne soveràne  
 With *glitterand* glance o'erspread the *octiane*<sup>9</sup> ;

<sup>1</sup> *Cramoisi*, Fr. crimson.

<sup>2</sup> Draws up.

<sup>3</sup> Yoke. Vide Rudd. Gloss.—Or qu. *amice* ?

<sup>4</sup> Yellowish-brown. Fr.

<sup>5</sup> Nostrils.

<sup>6</sup> Blazing.

<sup>7</sup> *Habillé*, dressed. The final *é* was in old Fr. written *eit*.

<sup>8</sup> Gleaming, shining.

<sup>9</sup> Ocean.

The large floodis *lemand* all of light,  
 But with *ane blenk* <sup>1</sup> of his supernal sight.  
 For to behold it was *ane glorie* <sup>2</sup> to see  
 The stablyt windis, and the calmyt sea,  
 The soft seasoun, the firmament serene,  
 The *loun* <sup>3</sup> illuminate air, and *firth amene* <sup>4</sup> ;  
 The silver-scalit fishes on the *grete* <sup>5</sup> ,  
 O'er-thwart clear streams *sprinkilland* <sup>6</sup> for the heat,  
 With finnis *shinand* brown as *synopare* <sup>7</sup> ,  
 And chisel tailis *stirrand* here and there.

\* \* \* \*

And lusty Flora did her bloomes sprede  
 Under the feet of Phebus' *sulyeart* <sup>8</sup> steed :  
 The *swardit* soil *enbrode* <sup>9</sup> with *selcouth* <sup>10</sup> hues,  
 Wood and forèst obumbrate with the *bews* <sup>11</sup> ;  
*Whais* blissful branches, portray'd on the ground,  
 With shadows sheen, shew *rochis* <sup>12</sup> rubicund,  
 Towers, turrets, *kirnals* <sup>13</sup> and pinnacles high,  
 Of kirkis, castles, and *ilk* fair city ;  
 Stood paintit every fane, *phioll* <sup>14</sup> , and stage,  
 Upon the plain ground by their own umbràge.

\* \* \* \*

And blissful blossoms, in the bloomyt *yard* <sup>15</sup> ,  
 Submits their heads in the young sun's safe-guard.

<sup>1</sup> Look, glance.<sup>2</sup> Glory. Fr.<sup>3</sup> Clean.<sup>4</sup> Pleasant water, *früh*.<sup>5</sup> Gravel.<sup>6</sup> Gliding swiftly, with a tremulous motion of their tails.<sup>7</sup> Cinnabar.<sup>8</sup> Sultry.<sup>9</sup> Embroidered.<sup>10</sup> Uncommon. Sax.<sup>11</sup> Boughs.<sup>12</sup> Rocks.<sup>13</sup> *Crenelles*, Fr. battlements.<sup>14</sup> Cupola ; *fiote*, Fr.<sup>15</sup> Garden. Vide supra, p. 245, note.

Ivy leaves rank o'erspread the *barmkyn*<sup>1</sup> wall;  
 The bloomit hawthorn clad his *pykis*<sup>2</sup> all:  
 Forth of fresh *burgeouns*<sup>3</sup> the wine-grapis *ying*  
*Endlang* the trellis did on twistis *hing*<sup>4</sup>.  
 The lockit buttons on the gemmyt trees,  
*O'erspreadand* leaves of nature's tapestries,  
 Soft grassy verdure, after balmy showers,  
 On *curland* stalkis *smiland* to their flowers,  
*Beholdand* them *sa* many divers hue,  
 Some *peirs*<sup>5</sup>, some *pale*<sup>6</sup>, some *burnet*<sup>7</sup>, and some blue,  
 Some *gres*, some *gules*<sup>8</sup>, some purple, some san-  
     guane,  
*Blanchit*<sup>9</sup>, or brown, *fauch-yellow*<sup>10</sup> many *ane*;  
 Some, heavenly-colour'd, in celestial *gre*<sup>11</sup>,  
 Some, watery-hued, as the *haw-wally*<sup>12</sup> sea;  
 And some, *departe* in freckles, red and white,  
 Some bright as gold, with aureate leavis *lyte*<sup>13</sup>.  
 The daisy did un-braid her crownel *smale*,  
 And every flower un-lappit in the dale.

\* \* \* \*

The flourdelyce forth spread his heavenly hue,  
 Flower *damas*<sup>14</sup>, and *columbe*<sup>15</sup> black and blue.  
 Sere downis small on dentilion sprang,  
 The young green bloomit strawberry leaves *amang*;

<sup>1</sup> Mound or wall; from *barme*, old Fr. the bank of a river.

<sup>2</sup> Thorns.

<sup>3</sup> Buds. Fr.

<sup>4</sup> Hang.

<sup>5</sup> Light blue. Fr.

<sup>6</sup> Light yellow. Fr.

<sup>7</sup> *Brunet*, Fr. brownish.

<sup>8</sup> Red.

<sup>9</sup> Whitish. Fr.

<sup>10</sup> Fawn-coloured yellow.

<sup>11</sup> *Gris*, Fr.; sky-blue.

<sup>12</sup> Dark waved.

<sup>13</sup> Little.

<sup>14</sup> The damask rose.

<sup>15</sup> Columbine.

*Gimp*<sup>1</sup> gilliflowers their own leaves *un-schet*<sup>2</sup>,  
 Fresh primrose, and the *purpour* violet.  
 The rose-knoppis, *tetand*<sup>3</sup> forth their head,  
 Gan *chyp*<sup>4</sup>, and *kyth*<sup>5</sup> their vernal lippis red;  
 Crisp scarlet leaves some *sheddand*;—*baith at anes*<sup>6</sup>,  
 Cast fragrant smell amid *fra* golden grains.  
 Heavenly lilies, with *lokkerand*<sup>7</sup> toppis white,  
 Open'd, and shew their crestis *redemyte*<sup>8</sup>.  
 The balmy vapour from their silken *croppis*<sup>9</sup>  
*Distilland halesum*<sup>10</sup> sugar'd honey-droppis—

So that *ilk burgeon*<sup>11</sup>, scion, herb, or flower,  
*Wox*<sup>12</sup> all embalmyt of the fresh liquour,  
 And bathit *hait*<sup>13</sup> did in *dulce* humours *flete*<sup>14</sup>,  
 Whereof the bees wrought their honey sweet.

On salt streams *wolk*<sup>15</sup> Dorida and Thetis;  
 By *rynnand*<sup>16</sup> strandis, Nymphs, and Naiades,  
*Sic* as we *clepe* wenches and *damysellis*,  
 In *gersy gravis*<sup>17</sup> *wanderand* by spring-wellis;  
 Of bloomed branches, and flouris white and red,  
*Plettand*<sup>18</sup> their lusty chaplets for their head.

<sup>1</sup> Pretty.<sup>2</sup> Unshut, open.<sup>3</sup> Peeping.<sup>4</sup> Burst their calix.<sup>5</sup> Show.<sup>6</sup> Both at once, i. e. while some buds were expanding, other roses were shedding their leaves.<sup>7</sup> Curling like locks or ringlets of hair.<sup>8</sup> Crowned.<sup>9</sup> Heads.<sup>10</sup> Wholesome.<sup>11</sup> Bud, or sprig. Fr.<sup>12</sup> Grew.<sup>13</sup> Hot.<sup>14</sup> Float.<sup>15</sup> Walked?<sup>16</sup> Running.<sup>17</sup> Grassy groves.<sup>18</sup> Plaiting.

Some sang *ring-songis*<sup>1</sup>, dances, *ledis*<sup>2</sup>, and rounds,  
 With voices shrill *while* all the dale resounds.  
 Whereso they walk *into* their caroling  
 For amorous lays does all the *rochis* ring.  
*Ane* sang "The ship sails over the salt *fame*<sup>3</sup>  
 Will bring *thir*<sup>4</sup> merchants and my *leman hame*."  
 Some other sings "I will be blithe and light,  
 My heart is lent upon so goodly wight."  
 And thoughtful lovers *rownyis*<sup>5</sup> to and fro,  
 To *leis*<sup>6</sup> their pain, and *plene*<sup>7</sup> their jolly woe;  
 After their guise, now *singand*, now in sorrow,  
 With heartis pensive, the *lang* summer's morrow.  
 Some ballads list endite of his lady;  
 Some lives in hope; and some all utterly  
 Despairit is; and *sa*, quite out of grace,  
 His purgatory he finds in every place.

Before we proceed to take notice of the English poets of this reign, it will be necessary to mention two more Scottish writers, whom Gawin Douglas has associated with Dunbar in the Palace of Honour.

"Of this nation I knew also anon  
 GREAT KENNEDIE and Dunbar, yet undead,  
 And QUINTINE, with an *huttock*<sup>8</sup> on his head."  
 (P. ii. St. xvii.)

<sup>1</sup> Rondeaux? But vide Rudd. Gloss.

<sup>2</sup> Lays; *leid*, cantilena. *Teut.*

<sup>4</sup> These or those.

<sup>6</sup> Lose.

<sup>3</sup> Foam.

<sup>5</sup> Whispers.

<sup>7</sup> Complain, lament.

<sup>8</sup> This word, which Mr. Pinkerton leaves unexplained, seems to be two French words in disguise—*haute toque*. *Toque* is described by Cotgrave to be "a (fashion of) bonnet or cap, somewhat like our

The first of these, WALTER KENNEDY, a native of Carrick, and the contemporary of Dunbar, is only known to us by *two satires on Dunbar* in their *flyting* (scolding or lampooning), and by a *poem in praise of age* (p. 189 of Lord Hailes's collection), consisting of five stanzas. One of these will be sufficient to give some idea of his style, though it may not quite justify the honourable epithet bestowed on him by the bishop of Dunkeld.

This world is set for to deceive us even,  
 Pride is the net, and covetise is the train :  
 For no reward (except the joy of heaven)  
 Would I be young *into* this world again !  
 The ship of faith tempestuous wind and rain  
 Drives in the sea of lollardry that *blaws*<sup>1</sup> :  
 My youth is gone, and I am glad and fain ;  
 Honour, with age, to every virtue draws.

Of the second of these poets, QUINTYN SCHAW, one specimen only remains, which is printed by Mr. Pinkerton, from the Maitland MS. Its title is, "*Advice to a Courtier*," which may possibly account for the head-dress assigned to him in the Palace of Honour. Quintyn's

*old courtier's velvet cap, worn ordinarily by scholars, and some old men.*"

I have been favoured by two ingenious friends in Scotland with different explanations of this obscure term. One of them says, "It is the Buchan and east-coast pronunciation of *huddock*, a little hood, which was probably a *cowl*:" the other, "*Huttock* and *huttockie* seems to be a diminutive, formed from *hut* or *hat* in a manner very common in some provinces of Scotland, particularly the western. Thus we have *bittock* and *bittockie*, *lassok* and *lassokie*, &c. &c. I therefore incline to think Quintyn Schaw's head-dress must have been a *small hat*, instead of a *haute toque*."

<sup>1</sup> Blows.

style seems to have been easy and familiar ; but having begun his poem with an idea of the resemblance between the life of a courtier and that of a mariner, he has introduced so many sea-phrases and maritime allusions, as to render his language almost unintelligible. The concluding stanza, however, which contains the moral, is sufficiently clear.

Dread this danger, good friend and brother,  
And take example *before of other* <sup>1</sup>.

Know, courts and wind has *oftsys* <sup>2</sup> varied :  
Keep well your course, and rule your rudder ;  
And think with kings ye are not married !

(Anc. Sc. P. p. 134.)

Among the English contemporaries of Dunbar and Douglas Mr. Warton enumerates these who follow. HENRY BRADSHAW, monk of the Benedictine monastery of St. Werburg in Chester, a miserable imitator of Lydgate, who wrote in stanzas the life of his patroness saint, daughter of a king of the Mercians <sup>3</sup> : ROBERT FABIAN, the historical alderman <sup>4</sup>, who is classed as a poet in consequence of the metrical *prologues prefixed* to the books of his *Chronicle* : JOHN WATTON, a priest who wrote some miserable *rhymes* for the purpose of enlivening his *theological tract*, called "*Speculum Christiani*" (Machlinia, about 1488) : and WILLIAM CAXTON, the celebrated printer, who, besides his rhyming *introductions* and *epilogues*, is supposed by Mr. Warton to be the author of a poem of

<sup>1</sup> Of others before you ?

<sup>2</sup> Oft-sithes, i. e. oft-times.

<sup>3</sup> "The holy life and history of Saynt Werburge, very frutesfull for all Christen people to rede." Pinson, 1521, 4to. Vide Ritson's *Bibliographia*; and Warton, vol. ii. p. 176. Bradshaw died in 1513.

<sup>4</sup> Fabian died, according to Stow, in 1511.



considerable length, entitled "*The Werk of Sapience* <sup>1</sup>," a folio containing thirty-seven leaves, printed by himself. But the only poets who deserve any attention are, ALEXANDER BARCLAY and STEPHEN HAWES; the first of whom is mentioned with much praise by the ingenious author of "*The Muses' Library*," and the second by Mr. Warton.

BARCLAY is by some supposed to have been a native either of Gloucestershire, Somersetshire, or Devonshire; while others, even among his contemporaries, assign him to Scotland: indeed, as Mr. Ritson observes, (Bibl. Poet.) both his name of baptism and the orthography of his surname seem to prove that he was of Scottish extraction. In his youth, perhaps about 1495, he is said to have become a student of Oriel College, Oxford, where he was patronized by the provost, Thomas Cornish, suffragan bishop of Tyne, to whom he afterwards dedicated his *Ship of Fools*. Having travelled, he became chaplain to the College of St. Mary Ottery, Devon, then Benedictine Monk of Ely, and at length took the habit of Franciscans at Canterbury. On the dissolution of his monastery, Wood informs us, he became vicar of Much-Badew in Essex, and in 1546 of St. Matthew at Wokey in Somersetshire. Lastly, he had from the dean and chapter of Canterbury the church of All-Saints in Lombard-street, London, which he held till his death in 1552, which took place at Croydon in Surrey, where, from his first eclogue, he appears to have lived in his youth. Wood says, "in his younger days he was esteemed a good poet and orator, as several specimens of his composition in those faculties showed, but when years came on, he spent his time mostly in pious matters, and in reading the histo-

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Ritson (Bibliographia) observes, that this is more justly attributed to Lydgate, though from the prologue Caxton appears to be the author. Vide also Herbert's Ames.

rics of Saints." He was a voluminous writer, particularly of translations, which were much admired by his contemporaries, as being distinguished by an ease and fluency which are not to be found in any other author of his age ; but his poetical merit seems to have been a good deal overrated.

His smaller pieces are, 1. *The Castle of Labour*, an allegorical poem from the French, in seven-line stanzas. (W. de Worde, 1506, 4to.) 2. *The Mirror of good Manners* (printed by Pinson), in the ballad-stanza, from the Latin elegiacs of Dominicus Mancinus de quatuor virtutibus, undertaken to oblige Sir Giles Alyngton, who had wished him to abridge or modernize Gower's *Confessio Amantis*. 3. *Five Eclogues*, compiled in his youth : the three first, paraphrased with very large additions from the *Miseriæ Curialium* of Eneas Sylvius, treat of "the myseryes of courtiers and courtes of all prynces in general:" the fourth, (in which is a long poem in stanzas, called *the Tower of Virtue and Honour*, being an elegy on the death of the duke of Norfolk, lord high admiral, introduced as a song of one of the shepherds,) "conteyning the maner of the riche men anenst poets and other clerkes:" and the fifth, "of the cytezen and up londyshman:" all printed by Pinson or de Worde, and the three first by Humfrey Powell (4to, without date). Besides these, he was the author of some less important pieces, as well as a tract "de Pronuntiatione Gallicâ," and a prose translation of Sallust's Jugurthine War, at the command of Thomas, duke of Norfolk, twice printed in folio by Pinson. From the eclogues, supposed by Mr. Warton to be the first written in English, he has selected a number of passages which, though they have no other merit, contain some curious particulars relating to the manners and customs of the time. (See a long note, vol. ii. p. 253, *Hist. Eng. P.*)

But Barclay's principal and most popular work was his

*Ship of Fools*, a poem in the octave-stanza, paraphrased "out of Laten, Frenche, and Doche," i. e. from the German original, written in 1494 by Sebastian Brandt, a learned civilian and eminent philologist of Basil, and two translations into French and Latin, the latter by James Locher, a scholar of the inventor, printed in 1497. To these, says Mr. Warton, he made "considerable additions, gleaned from the follies of his countrymen." "The design was to ridicule the reigning vices and follies of every rank and profession, under the allegory of a ship freighted with Fools of all kinds, but without any variety of incident, or artificiality of fable." "Our author's stanza is verbose, prosaic, and tedious: and for many pages together, his poetry is little better than a trite homily in verse. The title promises much character and pleasantry: but we shall be disappointed, if we expect to find the foibles of the crew of our ship touched by the hand of the author of the *Canterbury Tales*, or exposed in the rough, yet strong satire of *Pierce Plowman*." The book is not common, though twice printed (by Pinson in 1509, and Cawood 1570, both in folio, the latter containing his *Eclogues* and *Mirror*); but the reader who shall turn to the extracts from it, contained in Warton's history, and in "the Muses' Library," will probably not much lament their omission in this place.

STEPHEN HAWES was a native of Suffolk, and, like Barclay, after an academical education at Oxford, travelled (according to Wood) in England, Scotland, France, and Italy, and "became," says Mr. Warton, "a complete master of the French and Italian poetry." On his return to England, he obtained an establishment (as groom of the chamber) in the royal household; a reward, perhaps, for accomplishments so congenial to the taste of Henry VII., who was a great admirer of French, as well as a patron<sup>1</sup> of English poetry.

<sup>1</sup> Henry VII. was seldom extravagant in his donations; and yet

Hawes's principal work is *the Pastime of Pleasure*, the title of which in Tottel's edition is as follows: "The History of graund Amoure and la bel Pucell called the Pastime of Pleasure, conteynynge the knowledge of the seven sciences, and the course of man's lyfe in this worlde. Invented by Stephen Hawes, grome of King Henry the seventh his chamber." And Mr. Warton is of opinion, that "this poem contains no common touches of romantic and allegoric fiction;" that "the personifications are often happily sustained, and indicate the writer's familiarity with the Provencial school;" and that "Hawes has added new graces to Lydgate's manner<sup>1</sup>." It is, however, very doubtful whether every reader will concur in this favourable opinion of Stephen Hawes's merit.

*Graund Amour* (true Gallantry), the hero of the piece, falls asleep and sees a vision. He receives from *Fame* the first account of *La Belle Pucelle* (perfect Beauty), and is by her referred for farther particulars to the *Tower of Doctrine*. Here, certainly, is a beginning very much in the spirit of the times; but the subsequent conduct of the poem is not very well calculated to gratify the impatience of any reader who shall have taken a lively interest in the success of *Graund Amour's* passion. An accurate knowledge of the seven sciences, viz. grammar, logic, rhetoric, arithmetic, music, geometry, and astronomy, does not seem to be indispensably requisite to the success of a love adventure. These sciences, it is true, are all ladies; but many of them are dreadfully prolix in

we find in his household accounts the sum of 100 shillings paid to *Master Burnard*, a blind poet, in return, as it seems, for his poetical compositions.

<sup>1</sup> Wood says, "he was much esteemed by Henry VII. for his facetious discourse and prodigious memory; which last did evidently appear in this, that he could repeat by heart *most* of our English poets; especially Jo. Lydgate, a monk of Bury, whom he made equal in some respects with *Geff. Chaucer*."

their instructions. The two following stanzas are not offered as the best specimen of this author's style, but they are part of the hero's conversation with *dame Grammar*, who has (as she ought to have) the merit of being more concise than *dame Rhetoric*, *dame Music*, &c.

"Madam," quod I, "for as much as there be  
 Eight partes of speech, I would know right fain  
 What a noun substantive is in his degree,  
 And wherefore it is so called certain?"  
 To whom she answer'd right gently again,  
 Saying alway that a noun substantive  
 Might stand without help of an adjective.

"The Latin worde, which that is referred  
 Unto a thing which is substantial,  
 For a noun substantive is well averred,  
 And with a gender is declinal;  
 So all the eight partes in general  
 Are Latin words annexed properly  
 To every speech, for to speak formally."  
 (Cap. v.)

The education of *Graund Amour*, which, however, is somewhat enlivened by a meeting with his mistress, whom he had not hitherto seen, occupies rather more than one half of this Pastime of Pleasure; after which he begins his military career, for the purpose of obtaining *Belle Pucelle*. But here the attention of the reader is very unexpectedly diverted to a strange personage, who calls himself *Godfrey Gobelieve*, but who turns out to be *False Report* disguised as a fool. *Godfrey* calumniates the

whole female sex, and relates two tales, copied from the French fabliaux. The first is *the Lay of Aristotle*, the second nearly resembles that of *Hippocrates*; but the adventure is attributed to Virgil the enchanter, who, in return for the trick of the basket, inflicts on his fair enemy a punishment too disgusting to mention. After this gross and unnecessary episode, our allegorical hero achieves some marvellous adventures, and obtains possession of his mistress. But the story does not stop here; for *Graund Amour* proceeds to relate his own death and burial; and how *Remembrance set his epytaphy over his grave*; and how *Time came suddenly into the Temple*; and how *dame Eternity came into the Temple, in a fair white vesture*, and of the speech she made; after which comes "the excusacion of the aucthoure."

Throughout the work, Hawes has studiously imitated the style of Lydgate, but he has generally copied his worst manner. He is diffuse, fond of expletives, and his epithets add nothing to the sense. Of his more laboured diction, the reader will judge from the following stanza:—

Her redolent words, of sweet influence,  
 Degouted vapour most arómatic,  
 And made conversion of my cómplacence.  
 Her depur'd and her lusty rhetoric  
 My courage reform'd that was so lunatic,  
 My sorrow defeated, and my mind did modify,  
 And my dolorous heart began to pacify.  
 (Cap. xxxviii.)

The reader, when he has witnessed the final solemnities of her "*grete mariage*" with *Graund Amour*, will perhaps take his leave of *La Belle Pucelle* without any extraordinary reluctance.

And she took her leave—I kist her lovely;  
I went to bed, but I could not sleep;  
For I thought so much upon her inwardly,  
Her most sweet looks into my heart did creep,  
Piercing it through with a wound so deep;  
For nature thought every hour a day,  
Till to my lady I should my debt well pay.

Then *Perseverance*, in all goodly haste,  
Unto the steward, called *Liberality*,  
Gave warning for to make ready fast,  
Against this time of great solemnity,  
That on the morrow hallowed should be:  
She warned the cook called *Temperance*,  
And after that the sewer *Observance*,

With *Pleasance* the panter, and dame *Courtesy*  
The gentle butler, with the ladies all;  
Each in her office was prepared shortly,  
Against this feast so much triumphall:  
And *La Belle Pucelle* then in speciall  
Was up betime in the morrow gray,  
Right so was I when I saw the day.

And right anon *La Belle Pucelle* me sent,  
Against my wedding, of the satin fine  
White as the milk, a goodly garmènt  
*Branded* with pearl that clearly did shine;  
And so the marriage for to determinè





*joyfull Medytacyon to all Englonde of the Coronacyon of our moost naturall Soverayne lord kynge Henry the eyght ;*" a single sheet in 4to, without date, by the same printer.

(This is preserved in the library at Cambridge, and is ornamented with a curious wooden cut of the coronation of Henry VIII. and Catharine of Arragon.) "*A compenduous story, and it is called the Example of Vertu, in the whiche ye shall fynde many goodly storys, and naturall dysputacyons, bytwene foure ladyes, named Hardynes, Sapience, Fortune, and Nature ;*" printed by ditto, 1530 : *The Consolation of Lovers : The Delight of the Soul : Of the Prince's Marriage : The Alphabet of Birds* : one or more of which, according to Wood, were written in Latin, and, perhaps, never printed.

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Having been favoured by a friend, since the present volume was finished, with an extract from the original MS. of R. de Brunne's translation of Wace, containing the account of Arthur's Coronation, which has been already given in the Latin of Geoffrey of Monmouth, the French of Wace, the Saxon of Layamon, and the rude English of Robert of Gloucester ;—I here subjoin it for the satisfaction of the curious reader, by way of completing the series.

When the masses were done,  
And homeward were all *bon* <sup>1</sup>,  
The king did off his *tire* <sup>2</sup> there,  
That he to the kirk bare,

<sup>1</sup> *Boun*, ready.

<sup>2</sup> Attire ; unless it be a corruption of *tiara*, as the original mentions his *crown*.

And took another of less price :  
 The queen did the same wise.  
 The king into his *haleis*,  
 And sate at the meat *that ilk weis*<sup>1</sup> :  
 The queen *till* another *yede*,  
 And the ladies with her *gan* lead.  
 Sometime was custom of Troy,  
 When they made feast of joy,  
 Men together should go to meat ;  
 Ladies by themself should eat.  
 That *ilk* usage was at the feast,  
 The women come among the guest,  
 The women withouten men should be,  
 But serviters of *meynè*<sup>2</sup>.  
 The king was up at the *des*<sup>3</sup>,  
 About him the mickle press ;  
 About him the lordes sate,  
*Ilka* lord after his state.  
 Sir Kay was steward chosen of all,  
 To serve before the king in hall.  
 His clothing was rich and fine,  
 And the *pelore*<sup>4</sup> of ermine.  
 With him served before the king  
 A thousand in the same clothing.  
 Out of the kitchen served Sir Kay  
 And all his fellows that day.

<sup>1</sup> At that time ? *illā vice* ?<sup>3</sup> The high table.<sup>2</sup> The household.<sup>4</sup> Fur.

Sir Beduer on that other partie  
 He served of the buttery.  
 With him was clad in ermène  
 A thousand that brought the wine.  
 The king's cup Sir Beduer bare ;  
 He *yede* before that there were.  
 After him come all the rout  
 That served the barons all about.  
 The queen was served richly ;  
 Her servants was *signed*<sup>1</sup> ready  
 In all office for to serve  
 And before *tho* ladies *kerve*<sup>2</sup>.  
 Many vessel was there rich,  
 Of *ser*<sup>3</sup> colours not all *liche*<sup>4</sup>.  
 Of meats many manner service,  
 And *ser* drinkes on that wise.  
 All the *nobley couth* I not tell,  
 Ne might *stonde* thereon to dwell,  
 The names to say of the richness,  
*Ne* the men of prowess,  
*Ne* the courtesy, *ne* the honoür ;  
 Of *christianty* there was the flower.  
 Was there no knight so high of blood,  
*Ne* had so mickle worldes good,  
 That therefore should be holden of price,  
*But* he in deed were proved thrice ;  
 Thrice proved at the least ;

<sup>1</sup> Assigned.<sup>3</sup> *Sere*, many, several.<sup>2</sup> Carve.<sup>4</sup> Alike, uniform.

Then was he *alosed*<sup>1</sup> at the feast :  
 Then should his armes that men knew  
 And his clothing all o' hue :  
 That same *queintise*<sup>2</sup> his armes had,  
 In that same he should be clad :  
 His wife was clad in the same colour,  
 For her lord was of honoür.  
 If *ane* were doughty and single man,  
 He should *che*<sup>3</sup> him a *lemman*<sup>4</sup> :  
 Else should he not be loved,  
 But he had been in battle proved.  
 Tho ladies that were holden chaste,  
 For no thing would no do waste,  
 Tho ladies were clad in one,  
 And by their clothing men knew *ilkon*.  
 When they had eaten and should rise,  
 Ilk man dight him on that wise  
 That he *couth* in play :  
 Unto the field he took his way,  
 And parted then in *stedes sere*<sup>5</sup>  
 To play *ilkon* on their *manere*.  
 Some justed that *couth* and might,  
 For to show their steedes light :  
 Some skipped, and cast the stone,  
 And some wrestled full good *wone*<sup>6</sup>,

<sup>1</sup> I suppose this must mean *praised, commended* ; from the French and old Eng. word *les*, but I never saw the verb before.

<sup>2</sup> Device.

<sup>3</sup> *Che*, for *chese*, i. e. choose.

<sup>4</sup> Mistress.

<sup>5</sup> Many places.

<sup>6</sup> For a long time.

Darte shotte, lances cast,  
 And *tho* that *couth skirmed*<sup>1</sup> fast :  
*Ilkon* played the gamen he *couth*,  
 And *maste*<sup>2</sup> had used in his youth.  
 That best did in his playèng,  
 He was brought before the king,  
 And the king gave him meed,  
 That he was payed *or* he *yede*.  
 The ladies on the walls *stegh*<sup>3</sup>,  
 For to behold all their play.  
 Whoso had *leman thore* in place  
 Toward him turned the face,  
 On both sides *ilk* other beheld,  
*Tho* on the walls, *tho* in the *feld*.  
*Jogelours*<sup>4</sup> weren there enow,  
 That their *quaintise*<sup>5</sup> forthe *drouhe*<sup>6</sup> ;  
 Minstrels many with divers *glew*<sup>7</sup>,  
*Souns of bemes*<sup>8</sup> that men blew,  
 Harpes, pipes, and tabouers,  
*Fithols*<sup>9</sup>, *citolles*<sup>10</sup>, *sautrecours*<sup>11</sup>,  
 Belles, chimes, and *synfan*<sup>12</sup>,  
 Other enow *neuen*<sup>13</sup> I *ne kan*<sup>14</sup> ;  
 Songsters, that merry sung,  
 Sound of *glew* over all rung ;

<sup>1</sup> Skirmished.<sup>2</sup> Most.<sup>3</sup> Stood.<sup>4</sup> Jugglers.<sup>5</sup> Contrivances, instruments.<sup>6</sup> Drew.      <sup>7</sup> Glee, game.<sup>8</sup> Sounds of trumpets.<sup>9</sup> Perhaps fiddles.<sup>10</sup> Cymbals.<sup>11</sup> Dulcimers.<sup>12</sup> *Symphonier*, a sort of drum.<sup>13</sup> Name.<sup>14</sup> Ken not ? or, can not ?

*Disours* enow telled fables ;  
 And some played with dice at tables ;  
 And some at the hazard fast,  
 And lost and won by chance of cast.  
 Some, *that will'd not of the tattler* <sup>1</sup>,  
 Drew forth *meynè* <sup>2</sup> of the chequer,  
 With draughts quaint of knight and roke,  
 With great slight *ilk* other *snoke* <sup>3</sup> ;  
 At *ilk* mating they said "check !"   
*That most les sat in his nek* <sup>4</sup>.

Three days lasted the fêste ;  
 I trow was never none as that.  
 And when it come Wednesday,  
 That the folk should part away,  
 The king gave giftes rich.  
*Tho* to his service were *briche* <sup>5</sup>,  
 And for their service held their fees,  
 He gave them burghs and citès ;  
 Abbot and bishop avanced his rent,  
*Or* they fro the court went.  
 That of other londes were,  
 That for love come there,  
 He gave steeds and cups of gold,  
 (None richer *aboun mould* <sup>6</sup>)

<sup>1</sup> This probably signifies, "Some, that did not choose to attend to the talker, played at chess."

<sup>2</sup> The force, retinue.

<sup>3</sup> I do not understand this word.

<sup>4</sup> Perhaps, "He who lost the most staked his neck?" or "sat naked?" Vide the Fr. of Wace.

<sup>5</sup> I do not understand this word.

<sup>6</sup> Upon the earth.

Some gave he *hauberks*<sup>1</sup>, some greyhounds,  
 Some rich robes worth many pounds,  
 Some mantels with *veir* and *gris*<sup>2</sup>,  
 And some *mazers*<sup>3</sup> of rich price,  
 Some helms and haubèrks.  
 Godd palfreys he gave to clerks;  
 Bows and arrows he gave archèrs;  
*Runces*<sup>4</sup> good unto squièrs.  
 Some he gave *habergeons*<sup>5</sup>,  
 Some plates, and some *actons*<sup>6</sup>;  
 Some he gave knives of *plyght*,  
 And some swords richly dight.  
 Unto *disours*, that tell'd them gestes,  
 He gave clothes of wild bestes.  
 Some gave he *pelore* of ermine,  
 Some *lavaur*<sup>7</sup> of silver with basin.  
 Was there none ought worthy,  
 That he *ne* gave him blithely;  
 After that his state was *lyfte*<sup>8</sup>,  
 So he rewarded him with gyft.

<sup>1</sup> Qu. Ought this to be "*hawks*?"

<sup>2</sup> Veir is a variegated fur; gris, that of the grey squirrel.

<sup>3</sup> Cups. Old Fr.      <sup>4</sup> Horses. Old Fr.      <sup>5</sup> Coats of mail.

<sup>6</sup> A strong quilted leatherd covering for the body. *Auqueton*.  
Old Fr.

<sup>7</sup> Ewer. Fr.

<sup>8</sup> Exalted.

END OF VOL. I.

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